SUFI PERSPECTIVES ON EXPERIENCE AND REALITY

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Preface

The book in hand deals with two major aspects of Sufism: One the mystic experience which sufis go through in spiritual journey and the other the concept of reality which some of their distinguished personalities have expounded in their motives. This is the major task before this book. But in order that the general reader may also feel interested we have discussed in the Introduction what Sufism is, how did it begin, what are its different aspects, and what are the major works on Sufism which its leaders have written.

We have next devoted a whole chapter on the first great sufi Abu Yazid Bistami who describes his sufi experience in detail and hardly says anything about the nature of reality. We hope the reader of this chapter will have a complete view of the mystic experience sufis go through in their spiritual pursuit.

The next sufi we discuss is Shaykh Junayd Baghdadi who is regarded by sufi community as the father of Sufism. We have stated the sufi Journey (*tariqah*) in detail as he has formulated and the nature of mystic experience as he has described. He has not formulated any philosophical doctrine; the utmost that he has done is that he expounds a doctrine of *tauhid* which is more theological than philosophical.

The next sufi we discuss is a controversial figure Husayn ibn Mansur at Hallaj. We trace out his life, describe how he treaded the sufi path, narrate what the experiences he passed through, formulate the view of reality that emerges from his writings, note down the view of leading sufis on the one hand and scholars on the other expressed about him.

The fourth sufi is the great Islamic theologian turned sufi, Imam Muhammad al-Ghazali, who incorporated Sufism into Islam. We have discussed how a theologian Ghazali turned into a sufi and have discussed the nature of mystic experience.

We have next summarized the famous doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* as formulated by shaykh Akbar Ibn Arabi. This will give the reader a clear idea of his famous philosophy of *wahdat al-wujud*, unity of Being.

Centuries later Shaykh Ahmad, a renowned sufi of Sirhindī came out with a detailed criticism of Ibn Arabis doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* and formulated in its place his own philosophical doctrine, known as *wahdat al-shuhud*.

After the criticism of *wahdat al-wujud* by Sirhindī and his formulation of *wahdat al-Shuhud* in its place a whole controversy began in sufi circles.

Shah Waliy Allah restated *wahdat al-Wujud* in his own way.

We hope that the reader will have a clear view of the history of sufi thought both on mystic experience and reality.

Chapter One

Introducing Sufism

Sufism is a spiritual venture which some great men of piety have made at various periods of Islamic history and in various parts of the Islamic world, and which has sometimes developed into a sort of movement at the hands of their disciples and followers. There is a core of ideas, values, practices and traditions common to all these ventures, which is the reason why they have been referred by a common name, *taṣawwuf*, sufism. But *taṣawwuf* does not mean any one set of practices, or any one system of doctrines, or any one order of values. Nor is there any one personality or any one book on which all sufis agree. Sufism is a dynamic tradition.

Sufism has its roots in the Qur'an and Sunnah, and the life of the earliest Muslims. But in following centuries, it developed some features of its own. First of all, it developed a particular method to subdue the self, to purify the soul of evil, adorn it with virtue, and cultivate piety. Secondly, it developed a concept of passionāte love (*'ishq*), self effacement (*fanā*), and union (*jam'*) with God, and worked out a whole course of action to achieve that goal. Thirdly, it developed a way of direct knowledge, *kashf* or illumination, and with its help and with the help of its experience of *fanā* and *jam'* worked out a view of reality which was in most cases its own. Finally, it developed an ideal of life, in most cases with a new order of priorities. In developing all these aspects, sufism took elements from the Prophetic Islam, from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, and the life of the Elders, but it also took elements from other traditions, spiritual and intellectual, and some elements it developed out of its own experience. Sufism, as we have it, is both one and different from the Prophetic Islam, varying in oneness and difference in individual cases. Of the elements that

sufism took from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, some it retained as such, and some it reinterpreted and modified; and of the elements that it took from other traditions or developed on its own, some were consistent with the Prophetic Islam and some were discordant. This created problems for the sufis many of whom tried hard to reconcile, change or modify the conflicting elements and reaffirm their faith.

Prophetic Piety

To set sufism in proper perspective, a few words must be said about the Prophetic piety. This may also help to understand the spiritual dimension of Islam, and remove the misleading notion that Islam is essentially a law and that it was *taṣawwuf* emerging after the lapse of some centuries that gave it a spiritual dimension. Islam has its own concept of spirituality, and its own way to cultivate it. There are things that are common between the Prophetic spirituality and the sufi spirituality, but there are things that are different. This has to be studied very carefully.

The basic concept on which the edifice of Islam is raised is that there is no god except Allah, that He is the Creator and the Lord of the universe, that man is His *'abd*, bond servant, and that he has been created to serve his Lord (Q. 51:56). The better he serves Him, the closer he will come to Him, and the greater love and favour he will receive from Him. Not only that, he will also make himself a better man, more perfect and happy. Man's perfection and happiness lie only in serving God. The highest stage that he can rise to is the stage of perfect servant-ship (*'ubūdīyah*); there is no stage beyond that. He is not to vie for angle-hood, angels themselves have bowed to him (Q. 2:34); nor can he participate in divinity, which belongs to God exclusively. God wants man to be what he is, perfect man and perfect servant. Prophets and messengers who are the best of creation are always referred to in the *Qur'ān* as the servant (*'abd*) of God (37:81, 111, 122, 132, 38:17, 30, 41, 45),

even prophet Muhammad (pbh) at the height of his spiritual ascent is referred as God's servant (*'abd*).[1]

'Ibādah, the Arbic term which is rendered here as service means submission with humility and love. When it is said that *'ibādah* is the purpose of man's creation, it means, first of all, to take God as God, to affirm that He is absolutely one, and to submit to what He has revealed to His prophet; secondly, it means to glorify Him, worship him, remember Him and love Him; thirdly, it means to obey His commands, given directly by Him or through His prophet, and organize one's life accordingly; fourthly, it means to accept His providential decrees without grudge when they are unpleasant, and with gratitude when they are pleasing; and finally, it means to exercise the powers He has given man over His creation, living and non-living, animal and human, as His deputy (*khalīfah*) on earth (2:30), not as master, within the limits He has set, and carry out his will with regard to them as He likes. One has to preach to ones fellow beings the message of his Lord, tell them His will, persuade them to submit to it, restrain them from going against it, even fight the forces that come in the way, and see that the religion of the Lord prevails.

The Qur'ān and Sunnah have clearly defined all these aspects of *'ibādah*: faith, worship, submission to divine decrees, individual conduct and social obligations. They have also laid down the priorities. They have said what things are obligatory, what are commended, what are forbidden, what are undesirable and what are simply permitted. They have spelled this out in each and every aspect of *'ibādah* as well as in between different aspects. They have also indicated the extent to which the system of priorities is flexible and may take into consideration individual factors, social needs and conditions. These details are either known by statements of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah or derived from them according to certain rules which scholars have worked out.

'Ibādah, as explained above, is a comprehensive concept. It is not merely a matter of the mind or the body, it is also a

matter of the heart. It concerns motives and intentions, which lie behind a bodily or mental action, as it concerns feelings and attitudes which accompany them. One is required to serve God sincerely and honestly, with all the powers, physical and mental at one's command, and serve Him just to secure His pleasure (*riḍā*), with fear and love, with hope and trust, very meekly and humbly. To serve God is to put the whole of life, thought, action and feeling at His behest without any reservation.

The Qur'ān and Sunnah have shown in great detail how one is to perform this comprehensive service (*'ibādah*): How to strengthen faith and attain conviction; how to adore and worship God; how to remember Him, love Him, seek His help, and beg for His protection; how to get rid of evil habits and cultivate virtue; how to perform things that are obligatory, avoid those that are forbidden, pursue those that are commended, and deal with those that are permitted. In persuing these things the Qur'ān and the Sunnah want people to keep a few rules in mind. They should attend to duties first, and then to supererogatory works. They should not pick or choose from among the duties according to their wish, they must attend to all of them, whether they are personal duties or collective ones, or whether they belong to one aspect of life or the other. Of course, one should mind the priorities in them, but one should not ignore some and concentrate on others. In pursuing non-obligatory things, however, one may concentrate on some aspects, but it is better not to leave out others. To strike a balance between different aspects is very much commended for the individuals. In case of society, it is a duty. Society must see that people engage in prayer, fasting and *dhikr*, but they also engage in preaching Islam, bidding good and forbidding evil, helping the poor, protecting the weak, maintaining peace and order, administering justice and giving each his or her due. It must also see that they work for their economic welfare, and defend their freedom and liberty.

People should not withdraw from society and retire to forests and caves, except in exceptional cases and that, too, as an inferior alternative. They should marry, raise family, earn their living, and work for their good. The Prophet strongly discouraged celibacy, and disparaged withdrawal from society. With regard to the needs of the body and material goods, the Qur'ān recommended pursuing middle course in normal conditions (25:67). In times extra-ordinary, it called for sacrifice to promote the cause of religion and to fulfil the needs of the people. Neither the Qur'ān nor the Sunnah ever advised to give up earning livelihood, acquiring property, collecting money, or to give it out and wash ones hands off, if one has it. On the opposite, they encouraged them, even asked them to earn money, spend it on oneself, on the family, on the needy in society, and in the cause of religion. Ease and comfort, decency and elegance (*jamāl*) within reasonable means are things Islam has always approved. If one observes these rules of the Prophetic Sharī'ah, follows the priorities it has defined, and makes sacrifices, material and otherwise, that they involve one pursues the good of this life as well as the good of the life hereafter. One will perfect one's personality, secure the well-being of society, and attain greatest happiness in the life to come. To achieve that happiness one does not have to be a recluse, withdraw from society, subject oneself to any severe ascetic discipline, or engage all the time in worship and devotion.

The Prophet not only defined the way (*tarīqah*) how to serve God, he also directed and supervised the conduct (*sulūk*) of his companions who were in close contact with him. This was part of his mission, and he did accomplish it in the best way possible. Details of what he did in this regard are preserved in hadīth and *sīrah* literature. Here I will only note down a few things by way of illustration. One important advice that he gave to his companions was that they should proceed on the way slowly and gradually. They should not hasten or rush. When they take up one thing they should do it well before they take up another. If they have a choice they should prefer the

easier course rather than the difficult one. To do a smaller thing regularly is better than try a bigger thing which one might not continue.[2] He liked people to exhert themselves as much as they could, but cautioned them against over-straining, and strictly forbade all sorts of self-torture and mortification.[3] He asked them to seek the help of God while doing the best they could. They must proceed with humility; when they achieve anything they should consider it a favour of God, thank Him for it, pray to Him to accept it, and bless it. They should turn to Him again and again, begging Him to forgive their short-comings, protect them from the insinuations of Satan, and give them the power to do better.

The men that the Prophet raised, particularly the ones who worked with him for long were the most perfect servants of God on earth, and the best embodiments of the values he expounded. They were at one and the same time great devotees, preachers, soldiers, social workers and public servants. Part of the night they occupied themselves with God in prayer and supplication, and in day they worked for their family, people and religion. They lived a simple life, enjoyed the goods of the world without indulging in them when they had it, and spent from them in the way of God when it was needed. Although they lived a full and balanced life, like the Prophet, they did have their individual thrusts. Some gave themselves to prayer and fasting, some to the exposition of the Qur'ān or the teaching of the Hadith. Some distinguished themselves as preachers, some as social workers. Some excelled as commanders of armies, others as governors and rulers. Some were poor and lived as ascetics, others were rich, and spent their money on the needy in society and in the cause of religion. They believed that after fulfilling the duties, personal and collective, there were different ways, according to one's talents and circumstances and the needs of society to serve God, seek His pleasure (*riḍā'*) and attain His near-ness (*qurb*). It is important to note that the word which the Qur'ān uses for the closest relation with God is *qurb*[4] nearness or

intimacy, not *fanā* effacement of the self, and *jam'* union with God.

The *qurb* or intimate relation with God that they enjoyed was the highest *qurb*, the Ummah believes, one can achieve. In simple words it meant that they had the *walāyah* of God, His love and attention in the highest degree. They were His best friends (*awliyā'*) whom He loved and supported in a number of ways, ordinary and extra-ordinary, directly or through His angels. He guided them to truth, purified them from evil, adorned them with virtue. He helped them in adoring Him, remembering Him, carrying out His will, seeking His pleasure and loving Him. He assisted them in their struggle against untruth and injustice, protected them against their enemies and gave them victory over them. He responded to their prayers, granted their supplications, forgave their sins and showered on them His mercy. He announced that He was well-pleased with them (9:100), that He would put them in His Paradise, grant them His vision, and give them the eternal life of peace, joy and proximity to Himself.

There is no word in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah for 'spirituality'. For, the dichotomy of the spirit and matter which this word implies or smacks of is foreign to Islam. Man is a unity of body and mind, spirit and matter, therefore, his perfection here and happiness hereafter cannot simply be a matter of the spirit. Similarly, the service (*'ibādah*) for which God has created him, or the inner elevation that he will achieve by serving Him, or the reward that God will give him cannot be a matter of the spirit alone. The life that he will enjoy hereafter in Paradise will be a life of both spirit and matter, not only of spirit.

The words in the Qur'ān and Sunnah that refer to spiritual progress are *taqwā* and *iḥsān*. The former indicates the lower degree of spirituality while the latter indicates the higher degree. *Taqwā* is to avoid God's displeasure and chastisement by keeping away from what he has forbidden and doing what He has commanded.[5] It also means keeping away from what is

doubtful[6] and what may lead to the forbidden.[7] *Iḥsān*, on the other hand, is to go beyond that level, and do what God has commended and applauded, and do that in the best way He wants. But one cannot do that unless one has a living consciousness of God's presence, as if one sees Him, as the Prophet said.[8] The moving force behind *iḥsān*, is the love of God, love of His Self as well as love of what He loves. Neither *taqwā* nor *iḥsān* is limited to any part of life; both cover the whole life and run through it as blood runs through the body. Of *taqwā*, the Quran says: "Righteousness is not that you turn your faces (in worship) towards East or West. On the opposite, righteousness is to believe in God and the Last Day, and the angels, and the Book, and the messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of the slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfil the contracts which you have made; and to be firm and patient in suffering and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing (*muttaqūn*)" (2:177).[9]

The same comprehensive view, the Qur'ān has of *iḥsān*. Let us look at these verses: "These are the verses of the Wise Book, a guide and mercy for the doers of good (*muḥsinīn*), those who establish prayer and give charity (*zakat*) (31:1-4)." "Hasten to the forgiveness of your Lord as vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the God-fearing, who spend in the way of Allah in affluence as well in hardship, who restrain their anger and forgive people. Allah loves such good doers (*muhsinīn*) (3:133-134)." As for the God-fearing, they shall be in the midst of gardens and fountains, joyously receiving what their Lord will have granted them. Verily thy did good works before (*muḥsinīn*). They would sleep but little by might and woask for forgiveness at down, and in their wealth there was a sightful share for those who would ask and for the destitute.[51:15-19][10] And the Prophet said: "God has ordered *ihsān* in everything".[11]

With this vision of spirituality, it is natural that the Qur'ān and Sunnah should not rank people as higher or lower by dividing them according to their vocation into monks and householders, clergy and lay men, contemplative and active, poor and rich, and so on. They will only divide them on the basis of their performance into the *muqtaṣid* whose score is average and *sābiq bi l-khayrāt* (35:32) whose score in various good works is excellent. It should be noted that the Qur'ān uses the plural from *khayrāt* instead of the singular, *khayr*.

Birth of Sufism

For the first two centuries of Hijrah people followed on the whole the Prophetic *ṭarīqah*, way to cultivate piety. They neither changed the goal of the *ṭarīqah*, nor introduced anything new in its composition. However, from the beginning of the second century some aspects of the *ṭarīqah* came to be emphasized more than before. In the feuds between 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah that followed the death of 'Uthmān (d.35/656), some companions declined to take sides and stayed at home. Similarly in the revolts against some Umayyad rulers many religious figures did not participate and advised people to keep away. This policy did not remain confined to feuds and wars, pious men began to shun government offices and withdraw from public services when the rulers engaged in high-handed practices. Secondly, in the wake of growing affluence resulting from the conquest of new lands, when the upper classes indulged in pleasure and objectionable activities, worldly pursuits were scorned, material goods were condemned, and asceticism and renunciation were applauded. Fear of punishment in the hereafter was whipped up, and the torments of hell constantly reminded. At various centres throughout the Islamic world there appeared preachers that gave strong call to self-inspection, repentance, withdrawal from social life, renunciation of material goods, and cultivation of poverty. They held out that the way to save oneself from the blazing fire of hell was to engage more and more in prayer and devotion.

This trend was initiated by Hasan (d. 111/729) at Basrah, Ibrāhīm b. Adham (d. 161/778) in Syria, and Fuḍayl b. 'Iyāḍ (d. 187/803) in Khurasan. However, the most prominent role in the movement was played by the disciples and followers of Ḥasan such as Mālik b. Dinār (d. 131/748), Farqad al-Sabakhī (d. 131/748), Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī (d. 163/780), 'Abd al-Wāḥid b. Zayd (d. 177/793) and Muḥammad b. Wāsi'. Some of them came under increasing influence of Christian asceticism. They acquainted themselves with Jewish and Christian scriptures, and quoted from them in their sermons. Mālik b. Dinār, who knew Syriac and had a better knowledge of the Torah, Psalms and the Gospels, visited Christian hermits in their cloisters, wore wool, avoided meat, and abstained from marriage,[12] regarding it as an impediment in the life of the spirit. Reading the Qur'ān he wept bitterly, screamed and often fainted. During the sermons that his disciple 'Abd al-Wāḥid gave some of the audience are reported to have fainted and expired.[13] It is at the hands of 'Abd al-Wāḥid's disciples that the first cloister (*ribāṭ*) in Islam was built at Abadan.[14]

The prime force behind this piety was fear – fear of God, fear of death, and fear of Hell. This did not mean, however, that it lacked in the love of God. Fuḍayl is reported to have said: "God comes down to the lowest heaven every night and says: Can anyone who claims to love Me forget Me and sleep when the night comes? Would not every lover like to be with his love? I look at those who love Me when the night falls, and am with them before their eyes. Seeing Me they address Me, and getting Me before them they talk to Me. I shall make their eyes cool tomorrow in My paradise".[15] And 'Abd al-Wāḥid said: "I do not think that anything can be better than patience (*ṣabr*), except *riḍā,'* willing acceptance and resignation. There is nothing greater and higher than *riḍā,'* which is the crown of love".[16]

However, a completely new dimension of love was added by Fuḍayl's contemporary lady saint Rābi'ah al-'Adwīyah (d. 180/796 or 185/801), a flute player of Basrah who later

repented of her past life, and devoted herself completely to prayer and *dhikr*. The fire of love which blazed in her heart, and which she expounded so forcefully and sang in her verses so sweetly, was a passionate love (*'ishq*). It was caused by a burning desire to see God, to behold His Face and bathe oneself in its radiance. It was not so much caused by the desire to seek God's pleasure (*riḍā'*), and do what he wants His servant to do. It focused on the Divine countenance, rather than His will. Hence it occupied itself with the Divine Being, with adoring, worshipping and remembering Him, and cared less for carrying out His will, and do everything He would like one to do. It kept the lover restless unless he got what he wanted. A passionate lover cannot feel satisfied by obeying God's will and remembering Him. 'Aṭṭār writes: "(Rābi'ah) was always sighing and moaning. When she was asked about the ailment she was suffering from, she said: Alas! No doctor can cure my ailment. Its cure lies only in the vision of God. What makes me bear it patiently is the hope that I shall have that vision in the life to come".[17]

The second characteristic of passionate love is its exclusiveness. It has no place for loving anyone other than God, even if God Himself would like one to love him or her. Zubaydī writes that once Rābi'ah saw Ribāḥ b. 'Amr al-Qaysī (d. 195/810) kissing a child of his family and hugging him, she asked: "Ribāh! Do you love her?" When he nodded, she said: "I did not think that you would have a place in your heart left for the love of another".[18] A passionate lover loves God as he or she would like to love Him, not as God would like him or her to love Him. The way God likes His servants to love Him, and the way His Prophet and his companions loved Him, was not only to occupy oneself with adoring, worshipping and remembering Him, but also to carry out His will, work for His religion, and struggle to establish His religion. It did not negate other loves; it only required that other loves should be subject to the love of God. The Qur'ān says: "The faithful love God more than anything else (2:165)". It does not say that they love

no one else. In fact to love people, care for them, and work for their good for the sake of God is also to love God.[19]

Sufi Path (*Ṭarīqah*)

Tasawwuf in its proper sense as a piety different from the piety of renunciation (*zuhd*) and devotion (*'ibādah*) developed and reached perfection in the third and fourth centuries of Hijrah. The sufis of this period formulated what is called the sufi *ṭarīqah*, as distinguished from the Prophetic *ṭarīqah*. They developed the concepts of self-effacement (*fanā*) and union (*jam'*), claimed *kashf*, revelation as a new source of knowledge, put forth some new ideas regarding reality, expounded an ideal of life, and developed a whole terminology to express their experiences and ideas. Names of prominent personalities among them whose words and practices became normative for subsequent sufis are given by Sarrāj (d. 378/988) in his *Kitab al-Lūma'*, Kalābādhī (d. 380/990) in his *al-Ta'rruf*, Qushāyrī (d. 465/1073) in his *al-Risālah*, and Hujwirī (d. 465/1073) in his *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*. In what follows we will mainly draw upon them.

The *ṭārīqah* which these sufis developed has remained in essence the same throughout the history of *taṣawwuf*. Changes did occur later, but they were more concerned with details or with additional means. A novice that intended to follow their *ṭarīqah* had to pass through a hard discipline in the preparatory stage. According to Qushayrī, he had to give away the property and money he had in his possession.[20] Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), however, allowed him to retain what was absolutely necessary. He was not supposed to engage in any work to earn his living.[21] To abstain from earning, Abu l-Ḥasn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Fārisī said, is one of the ten pillars of *taṣawwuf*.[22] To relinquish the public position of honour (*jāh*) if one had it, to give up unqualified adherence to a particular school of jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and to repent of all the sins one had committed, were the other conditions which, according to Ghazālī, a novice had to fulfil before entering the *ṭarīqah*.[23]

He should then take a sufi *shaykh* as guide and in his supervision, do the following things to clear the way from obstructions (*qawāṭi' al-ṭarīq*). He should reduce his social contacts and retire to a secluded place. If he had not married he should abstain from marriage, but if he had married, he should practice continence as much as he could. He should speak least and observe silence. He should reduce his food, keep on fasting, and abstain from eating as many days and nights as he could.[24] Shal b. 'Abdullāh al-Tustarī (d. 273/886), first began to eat once after three days, then after five days, then after seven days till he took only one meal after twenty five days.[25] Were a sufi to complain after five days that he was hungry, Abū'Alī al-Rawdhbārī (d. 322/934) would expel him from the sufi community and ask him to go to the market and earn his living.[26] The novice was also to reduce his sleep as much as he could, so that he could spend his night and most of his day in prayer and *dhikr*, remembering God.

With this hard discipline the sufi was to embark on an intensive course of *dhikr* and *fikr* (meditation), the two main planks of the sufi *ṭarīqah*. But first he had to cut down devotional activity to absolutely obligatory (*farā'iḍ*) and highly recommended (*rawātib*) prayers, and abstain from all other works, whether preaching, bidding the good, helping the needy or fighting evil and injustice. What more, he should also stop reading the Qur'ān, as Ghazalī was advised by his instructor and devote all his time to one single thing: *dhikr*.[27]

I will not go into the methods of *dhikr* which became more and more elaborate with the passage of time. I will limit myself to some general observations. In the Qur'ān and Sunnah *dhikr* has a wide connotation. It means saying with the tongue words remembering God, His attributes and His relations with us, or remembering them in the heart. But it also means to read and recite His Book, explain and expound its ideas, defend and support its injunctions. Similarly, to remember God's commands, follow them in life and persuade others to act upon them is no less a part of *dhikr*. But sufis took *dhikr* in a narrow

sense of saying the names of God or remembering them in the heart. Further, they understood the Quranic injunction to remember God frequently (*dhikr kathīr*, 33:41) to mean that one should repeat His name continuously. Secondly, they did not think that they had to stick to the words of *dhikr* as they occur in the Qur'ān or Sunnah. Instead of saying *lā ilāha illa Allāh*, for example, they thought they could simply say 'Allah', even use the third person singular pronoun *Huwa* (He). Thirdly, to promote concentration of mind in *dhikr*, they thought they could use any aids they found anywhere such as closing the eyes, or holding breath which was prevalent in Buddhist and Hindu circles. Fourthly, they also felt free to give quite a different meaning to the words of *dhikr*. For instance while saying *lā ilāha illa Allāh* (there is no god other than Allah) they could take the words to mean: There is nothing to be sought other than Allah', or "There is nothing in existence other than Allah." This was embarking upon *fikr*, contemplation. They extended this practice to various other verses of the Qur'ān. For instance they understood the verse, "*kullu shay-in hālik illā wajhahū*" (28:88) in the sense that nothing really existed there except God.[28] Finally, and the most important thing was that *dhikr* was not only a form of devotion desired in itself, it was carried out with a view to ignite the fire of passionate love (*'ishq*) in the heart and attain the experience of *fanā*, negation of the self, and *jam'*, union with God. The sufi was to go on saying Allah so incessantly, first with the toungue and then with the heart, and then with his whole being that he was no more conscious of the world around or of himself, even of his doing the *dhikr*, and was conscious of God and God alone. He was in this way to dissolve himself and unite with God.

The journey from repentance to union, was divided into various stages, called *maqāmāt* (sing. *maqām*) stations, which Sarrāj (d. 378/988) counts as: repentance (*tawbah*), abstenance (*wara'*), renunciation (*zuhd*), poverty (*faqr*), patience (*ṣabr*), resignation (*riḍā*), trust (*tawakkul*) and love (*maḥabbah*).[29] Traversing these stations the sufi was expected to pass through

various experiences (*aḥwāl*, sing. *ḥāl*) such as joy (*ṭarab*) and sorrow (*ḥuzn*), elation (*basṭ*) and depression (*qabḍ*). The difference between *maqām* and *ḥāl* as Qushayrī (d. 465/1072), stating the most popular view, explains is that *maqām* is something to be attained by one's effort while *ḥāl* is experienced as something happening to oneself caused by God, just a favour from Him. About *maqām*, it was also thought, Qushayrī points out, that they are graduated stages such that one can not move to the higher stage unless one perfects the lower one. For instance, one can not enter the stage of trust (*tawakkul*) unless one perfects his contentment (*qanā'ah*), or think of *zuhd*, renunciation of the permissible, unless one perfects *wara'*, abstaining from the doubtful.[30]

This was one view. Others regarded *aḥwāl* to be the result of *maqāmāt*, just as the *maqāmāt* were the result of *a'māl*, actions. Still others thought that in the beginning what the sufi has are flashes (*lawāmi'*) and glimmers (*lawā'iḥ*); after he has continued for sometime he has *aḥwāl*; and when they become established they are called *maqāmāt*.[31]

Starting with their views of *maqāmāt* and *aḥwāl*, sufis tried to identify and fit in their scheme various virtues which the Qur'ān and Sunnah mention as part of a pious life. In some cases they succeeded, and in some they met with difficulties. For instance, they could not agree whether *riḍā'* was a *maqām* or a *ḥāl*.[32] In fact *riḍā* has both the aspects; it is a feeling but a feeling of satisfaction and joy one gets by submitting oneself completely to God. Ghazālī is more correct when in his analysis of these virtues he points out three aspects of knowledge (*'ilm*), feeling (*ḥāl*) and action (*fi'l*)[33]. Again the idea that some *maqāmāt* are higher and some lower, and that one cannot rise upto the higher unless one perfects the lower is true of some virtues only, but not all. Fear, for instance, is a feeling which runs simultaneously with love till the end of life, and no one, nor even a prophet can outgrow it. Only the people of Paradise will be completely free from all fear (7:49). And finally, since *fanā* and *jam'* considered as the end of the

journey or at least an essential and very important part of it, some new *maqāmāt* and *aḥwāl* not mentioned in the Qur'ān and Sunnah such as *sukr*, inebriation, and *ghaybah*, unconsciousness, found a place in the sufi *ṭarīqah;* some terms mentioned in them like *tawḥīd*, affimation of God's unity, or trust (*tawakkul*) assumed new meanings; and the status of various others, such as patience (*ṣabr*) and hope (*rajā'*) was revised and lowered.[34]

Sufi Experience of *Fanā* and *Jam'*

Fanā and *jam'* are not terms of the Qur'ān or Sunnah. They were coined by the sufis to describe their experience. It is not un-likely that in case of *fanā* they were influenced by the Buddhist concept of *nirvāna*, extinction of the self. But while the similarity between *nirvāna* and *fanā* is apparent, the difference between the two concepts should not be overlooked. *Nirvāna* is just the dissolution of the self into nothingness, even though it is not to be equated with pure non-being, for Buddha declined to talk about it. The case with *fanā'* is completely different. It is passing away from the self and abiding in God (*baqā' bi Allāh*). Later on, the word was extended to cover earlier stages of *sulūk* when the sufi passes away from disobedience (*ma'ṣiyah*) and vice (*sū'al-khulq*).[35] This was obviously a move to win respectability for the term.

Fanā proceeds through stages: two of them which are considered most important we will single out for remarks. At the first stage the sufi ceases to see that creatures have any power of their own, that they cause or effect anything, that anyone does any work or performs any action. He only sees that all power is with God, that it is He who determines everything, every event and every action, brings it into existence, controls it and manages it.

Qushayrī explains this *fanā* in these words: "He who perceives the working of (Divine) power (*qudrah*) in the happening of things is said to have passed away from referring

them to the creatures. When he thus ceases to predicate things of other beings he subsists by the attributes of God. One who is thus possessed by this experience (*al-ḥaqīqah*) and does not see other things, whether themselves, their attributes, properties or effects he dies to the creation and subsists in God".[36] This vision of things happening exclusively by the power and will of God, Qushayrī elsewhere calls the vision of God's Lordship (*shuhūd al-rubūbiyah*).[37] Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī (d. 561/116) the founder of the Qādirīyah order puts it in this way: "The sufi sees with the light of God and sees nothing but God's action in himself and in all other created beings, he does not see anything else. That is, he does not see any actor in reality other than God and sees everything only as instrument, a cause completely moved, controlled and manipulated (by God)".[38]

At the next stage of *fanā* the sufi is not even conscious of his own being or of things around, he is completely lost in the being of God. This is the stage which is called the stage of *fanā al-fanā*, that is, he is not conscious of anything, even of his own dissolution.[39]

Qushayrī explains the difference between the two stages in this way: "He who affirms himself, and affirms the creation, but sees that everything exists by God and is there by His will and power, attains a kind of union (*jam'*). But when he no longer perceives the creatures and is completely eradicated of himself, and is absolutely unaware of anything else as a result of being completely possessed by the Reality (*al-ḥaqīqah*), he attains union of the union (*jam' al-jam'*)".[40] That is, in the first stage of *fanā* the sufi is conscious of his being and the being of things in the world, distinct from God. He is also conscious that they are created beings (*khalq*) and that God is their creator and Lord. The only *fanā* that happens at this stage is that he does not see that they have any power or will of their own, and that they do or cause anything. And the *jam'* that he attains at this stage is that he sees that everything that exists there including his own being is caused, moved and controlled completely by the one single all-active will of God. At the next

stage of *fanā*, on the other hand, he not only does not see any other cause or will, he also does not see any other being in existence including himself. He only sees God and is aware of Him alone. At this stage, let it be clear, he can not be aware of God as God. For that would imply the awareness of himself and the world as other than God, as creature and servant, an awareness which he had at the first stage of *fanā* and which he has passed over. Now he is only aware of a simple bare unity, above all difference and distinction.

This is a transcendental experience. The sufi at this stage, Hujwirī explains passes away from his reason and his feeling.[41] But this does not mean, al-Kalabādhī adds, that he becomes unconscious (*sā'iq*) or insane (*ma'tūh*).[42] It only means that his reason stops working, and he is no more conscious of pleasure or pain. Speaking about this state of *fanā*, Sarīy al-Saqaṭī (d. 257/870) once said to his disciple Junayd: "If in this state a sufi is struck at his face by a sword he would not feel any pain." When the young disciple wondered at the master's remark, Sarīy repeated his words to reaffirm that it was literally true.[43]

Secondly, this experience is an ecstatic experience, extremely rejoicing and blissful, that plunges the sufi in deep intoxication (*sukr*).[44] The experience itself is short-lived, and passes off very soon, but the sufi continues to live under its intoxicatory influence for days and nights. Sahl b. 'Abdullāh al-Tustarī has been reported to have remained in that state twenty to twenty four days without eating anything, even sweating in times of extreme cold with only a shirt on his body.[45] And Abū 'Aqqāl al-Maqhribī is reported to have continued in that state for four years till he died.[46]

Thirdly, some sufis in this state indulge in *shaṭḥ*. They are so overwhelmed by their unitive experience that they utter words like 'I am the Real (al-Haqq)', or 'Glory to me! How great I am' or 'There is none in my robe except God'. They may also make boastful claims such as 'on the Day of Judgement I will put up my tents on the banks of Hell and would see that no one enters it'.[47]

Fourthly, as the experience of union (*jam'*) is the negation of difference and distinction, sufis in this state or under its influence are not able to distinguish between the good and the bad, between obedience and sin, *tawḥīd* and *shirk*. Naturally, therefore they feel a conflict between their experience and the Sharī'ah which is based on the distinction between God and man, faith and unfaith, right and wrong. No wonder if Abū Bakr Shiblī (d. 334/946) under the influence of that experience stood in a mosque to give the call for prayer he only said: 'I witness that there is no god other than Allah', and stopped and hesitated for a while to say: 'I witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of God.' He felt a conflict between his unitive experience and the witness to another, even though it was none other than the Prophet.[48] The experience of union is also opposed to the duties of servant-ship (*'ubūdīyah*). Some sufis who are under its influence fail to perform obligatory prayers. Others who are guarded (*maḥfūz*) are returned to the sober state (*ṣaḥw*) just to perform their prayers in time. It has been reported of Abu l-Ḥusayn al-Nūrī (d. 295/907) that in that condition he stood on his feet for full seven days in the mosque of al-Shunayzī returning to sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) to perform prayers at their times and lapsing again into un-consciousness (*ghaybah*).[49]

Finally, since to naught oneself and unite with God the sufi has to pass through an extremely severe and protracted struggle against the self he often becomes impatient, loses peace of mind, feels uneasy and restless, and keeps on sighing and moaning. Passing through this state once Shiblī came to Junayd and put to him a number of questions. Junayd remarked: "Abū Bakr! I feel pity on you. I am very much worried about your return to sobriety. This restlessness, commotion, excitement, agitation and *shaṭḥ* is not the characteristic of a perfect sufi (*mutamakkin*), it indicates the status of the beginner (*mubtadī*) in *taṣawwuf*".[50]

Is the experience of *fanā* and *union* the final experience? Is it the end of the road the sufi wants to reach? The answer that

our authors give is that it is not the end. The final experience, al-Qushayrī says, is the one which sufis call *al-farq al-thānī*, the second difference. His words are: "After this (i.e. the experience of *jam' al-jam'*) there comes a higher state (*hālah 'azīzah*) which the community (of sufis) calls second difference (*al-farq al-thānī*). That is, the servant is returned to the state of sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) at the time of obligatory prayers (*farā'iḍ*) so that he can perform them at their times. This is a return to God with God, not to man with man. In this state he sees himself in the full control of God. He sees the Originator of his being and his self by His power, and the producer of his acts and states for him by His knowledge and will".[51] It should be noted that al-Qushayrī presents it as the view of the sufi community (*al-qawm*) in general, and not as his own view or the view of any particular sufi. That this is the view of sufis in general is supported by statements noted by almost all our writers, such as "every union (*jam'*) without separation (*tafriqah*) is atheism (*zandaqah*), and every separation without union is negation (*ta'tīl*)".[52] Hence, the experience which sufis consider to be final is not an experience of pure one-ness or bare unity, but the experience of oneness and difference, or of difference in unity.

Nicholson considers this as a kind of concession which sufis make to their faith, whereas from the point of pure sufism the highest experience can only be of complete effacement (*fanā*) in God and perfect union with Him.[53] To be sure, the logical end of the whole process of *dhikr* and *love* as sufis practice it is the experience of complete oneness, beyond all difference and distinction. But is this logical end the final end which sufis seek? Do they consider the complete dissolution of their being and perpetual absorption in an ecstatic experience of absolute undifferentiated unity the final end of their journey? This is certainly not the view of the sufis, as Qushayrī understands it. There is no reason why the sincerity of his statement that the experience of second difference or second *ṣaḥw* is the higher experience should be doubted. Of course, there have been sufis who held, or held at some stage of their

sulūk that intoxication (*sukr*) is better than sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) or *jam'* is higher that *farq*. This has given rise to a discussion among them as to which is higher, *jam'* or *farq*, *sukr* or *ṣaḥw*. The majority of sufis, as Hujwirī observes,[54] exalt *farq* and *ṣaḥw* over *jam'* and *sukr*.

Although sufi masters (*shuyūkh*) have always held that the experience of *farq*, second difference and *ṣaḥw* is higher than the experience of *jam'* and *sukr*, the most clear and categorical statement on the subject recorded in sufi literature comes from the famous Nagshbandī sufi of India, Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1034/1624). He clearly says that the experience of *jam'*, union or oneness is just an experience which sufis pass through on their way to God. Some sufis stay at that stage and do not go beyond it, others move ahead and are graced with the experience of *farq*, difference between the world and God, man and the Lord.[55] The *farq* that the sufi experiences at this stage is not a passing phase, nor the *ṣaḥw* that he attains a short break within a period of *sukr* as noted above in the case of al-Nūrī. It is an experience that stays, a station (*maqām*) to which one rises, if God so wills, leaving behind the stage of *jam'*. Sirhindī even asserts that *farq*, too, has its stages, a lower stage which is mingled with *jam'* and a higher stage which is of absolute *farq*, where the sufi experiences that God is *warā' al-warā'*, beyond the beyond.[56] He is not alone in this view, there are other sufis who have the same view.

The stage of *farq* is free from the characterists which mark the stage of *jam'*. The sufi is not in *sukr*, he becomes sober and regains his reason and feelings. He does not indulge in *shaṭḥ* or boastful claims. He no longer feels any conflict with the Sharī'ah, he is quite humble and submissive. Nor does he feel restless and agitated; he is calm, quiet and serene.[57]

Returning to the experience of *fanā* and *jam'* let us ask: What does the experience mean? Does it reveal anything? On these questions there are different views among the sufis. The view which Sarrāj, Kalābādhī, Qushayrī and Hujwirī have expounded in their books can be summarized as follow:

Fanā, as Kalābādhī says, is not the loss of humanity; it only means that for the time being one is not conscious of pleasure or pain.[58] It does not mean, he explains at another place, that the sufi loses his humanity and becomes an angel or a pure spirit. It simply means that he is not conscious of his feelings.[59] Hujwirī summarizes his discussion of *fanā* in this way: "One experiences *fanā* of his own being when one perceives the majesty (*jalāl*) of God, and becomes aware of His greatness. God's majesty overwhelms him in such a way that he forgets this life as well as the next, attaches no importance to stations and states, and cares no longer for miracles. He has no thought and no desires. He is not even conscious of these losses. In this state of *fanā* his tongue only repeats the name of God while his body becomes humble and submissive".[60] Sarraj writes: "Humanity does not disappear from man just as blackness does not vanish from a thing which is black. Those who speak of the disappearance (of humanity) only mean that one stops seeing oneself as doing one's actions and works and instead sees that God does them for him".[61]

Union with God they explain in the same way. Sarraj writes: "God does not enter into the heart. What enters the heart is faith in God, belief in Him, and the knowledge that He is one. All these things are the attributes of His creatures as He has created them in them. It is not at all the case that He enters in them with His essence or His attributes".[62] Sarraj condemns those sufis of Baghdad who claimed that after passing away (*fanā*) from their own attributes, they entered (*dakhalū*) into the attribute of God, taking *fanā* and *dukhūl* in the sense of indwelling (*hulūl*) as Christians believe in the case of Christ. He says that the real meaning of these words is to realize that all that we do proceeds from God and is a gift from Him. The meaning of passing away from one's attributes and entering into God's attributes, is to pass away from one's own will and enter into the will of God in the sense that one realizes that his wills are a gift of God which He bestows on him of His own will.[63]

Hujwirī illustrates the point in this way: "Everything that enters fire becomes under its influence like fire. As the power of fire changes the property of the thing in the thing, in the same way acts the will of God which is far more powerful than fire. One must, however, understand that the action of fire happens in the property of iron which is one with iron. The iron itself does not become fire".[64]

In short, in the experience of *fanā* and *jam'*, the sufi loses his self-identity, *feels* that he has no will and no power of his own, that it is only a gift of God in him; in fact, it is God who wills and acts in him. At the higher stages not only that he loses his will he also loses his feeling and consciousness, he is no more conscious of himself, he is conscious of God alone. This loss of will, feeling and consciousness, our authors explain, is not the loss of humanity in any real sense and a transformation into something angelic or Divine. Whatever change happens happens within the humanity of the sufi which is neither transmuted nor divinized.

Sufis of this period were primarily interested in describing their experiences of *fanā* and union. They had little interest in philosophizing about it. Those who indulged in philosophy were very few. Of them we will discuss Junayd and Ḥallāj. None, however, seems to take the experience of bare unity or oneness as revealing that being or existence is one. This idea developed later, and different sufis conceived it in different ways, some of which we shall study in this book.

Mystical Gnosis (*Ma'rifah*)

Our common sources of knowledge are our senses and reason. There is a third source intuition, by which we know some moral truths. Besides them, we have the prophetic revelation (*al-waḥy*). In addition to these sources sufis discovered from their study of the Qur'ān and Sunnah and the common human life, or developed on the basis of their own experience some other extra-ordinary ways of knowing, and

gave them different names such as talking (*taḥdīth*), explaining (*tafhīm*), tasting (*dhawq*), gnosis (*ma'rifah*), God-given knowledge (*'ilm ladunnī*), vision (*mushāhadah*), illumination (*tajallī*), unveiling (*mukāshafah*), contact (*ittiṣāl*), dream (*ru'yā*), insight (*firāsah*), audition (*hātif*), idea (*khāṭir*), allusion (*ishārah*) etc. Very often these ways are referred by the words *kashf*, revelation and *ilhām*, inspiration.[65]

The claim that there is a kind of knowledge immediate and direct in addition to reason (under which sensation and intuition are often placed) and revelation cannot be denied. There is sufficient evidence in the Qur'ān and Sunnah to support this claim. That piety promotes this knowledge is also attested by the Qur'ān. For instance, "O believers, if you fear God, He will grant you a criterion (*furqān*)" (8:29). The sufis not only discovered various forms in which extra-ordinary knowledge is imparted, and identified them, they also cultivated some methods already employed and developed others to acquire this knowledge. They used them to know things of the past, and things of the future, read thoughts in the mind, see what was going on in graves, know the truth about transcendental realities such as the soul, angels and God. They also made judgements about values and priorities in their light.

The method which Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) has described in the *Iḥyā'* consists of purifying the soul of sin and evil, adorning it with virtues, emptying the mind of all thought, concentrating it on God, and waiting for the knowledge to come out from within the heart.[66] In his book *Fuyūḍ al-Ḥaramayn*, Walī Allāh (d. 1176/1762) has discussed different ways in which the soul establishes contact with other souls. He tells of his own experience, how he got in touch (*ittiṣāl*) with the soul of the sun, saw it, and talked to it.[67]

Another way was contempleation on the Qur'ān, Sunnah and the Sīrah of the Prophet and his companions, in a manner somewhat different from the manner scholars of Qur'ānic commentary (*tafsīr*), *ḥadīth* and jurisprudence (*fiqh*) follow in their disciplines. With regard to the Qur'ān, for instance, they

introduced the idea of *ishārāt*, allusions, which were more or less ideas sufis get through the process of association, rather than proper deduction. Similarly, entering into the field of *fiqh* they differentiated between the *ḥāl*, state and the *sunnah*, example of the Prophet. Interpreting trust (*tawakkul*), for example, in the sense of abstaining from earning, and trusting God that He would provide the sustenance, they said that the *ḥāl* of the Prophet was *tawakkul*, although his *sunnah* was to earn livelihood.[68] The implication was that relying on God for sustenance was a higher state (*'azīmah*) of piety while earning was a concession (*rukhṣah*) for the common man.

The knowledge that the sufis get through all these means, contribute to the views they expound on intellectual questions regarding reality, value, as well as practical matters of life, and the sufi *ṭarīqah*. What is the validity of this knowledge? Is it self-authenticating? Or should it be subjected to scrutiny and examination, and corroborated by other evidences? On this question the view which the earliest sufis held is represented in the following statements. "Sometimes, an idea from among the ideas of this community (i.e. the sufis) comes in my mind and stays there for days. I do not accept it unless two rightful witnesses vouch for it: the Book (of God) and the Sunnah (of the Prophet)[69] (Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī (d. 215/830)). "One who does not know (*yaḥfiẓ*) the Qur'ān well and does not study (*yaktub*) the Ḥadīth, should not be taken as a guide. For this knowledge of ours is governed (*muqayyad*) by the Book and the Sunnah"[70] (Abu I-Qasim al-Junayd (d. 298/910)). Statements like this can be easily multiplied.[71] They clearly underline the serious and honest commitment of the sufis to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. However, they are primarily declarations of their intention. How for their ideas and practices were really governed by the Qur'ān and the Sunnah can only be decided after examination.

Sarrāj writes: "Fatḥ (b.'Alī) al-Muṣalī (d. 220/835) one day took up in his arms one of his sons and kissed him. He then heard a voice (*ḥātif*) saying: "Fatḥ! Are you not ashamed that

you love someone besides Us?" Fath says that he did not kiss any child after that. This clearly goes against the practice of the Prophet who not only kissed his son and grandsons, but also chided those who refrained. To Aqra' b. Habis, for example, who would not kiss his sons, he said: "One who does not show love and mercy will not have mercy (from God)." What strikes us most is that Sarrāj cites the ḥadīth of Aqra, quotes these words of the Prophet, yet finds excuse for Fatḥ's practice.[72] The only conclusion that we can draw is that though, in principle a sufi subjects his ideas, inspirations and visions to the authority of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, it does not mean that in practice he always follows that principle.

The question how true is *kashf,* and how certain is the information that it gives was not discussed at length by earlier sufis. The general presumption, despite the words of Dārānī, Junayd and other masters (*shuyūkh*) was that it provided true and certain knowledge. Only sufis of later times raised the question, and discussed it and pronounced that *kashf* was not a reliable source of knowledge, that mistakes crept into what it revealed as well as in the interpretation which sufis gave it, and that the knowledge which it provided was not certain but at best probable (*ẓannī*).[73]

The doctrines and philosophies which are worked out by sufis in the light of their mystical experiences, unitive or differentiative, and with the help of information provided by other sources such as visions, voices, illuminations and dreams, can claim no certainty. First of all the knowledge that the sufi has through *kashf* is not certain; second, in their formation, the doctrines and philosophies involve beliefs and ideas which he gets through various other sources that are not infallible; and third, the doctrines of one sufi vary from the doctrines of another sufi not only in details but also on major issues as we shall see in the course of this book. Mystical doctrines are just like any other doctrine and are subject to the same criteria of truth as others.

Goal of Sufism

What is the goal of sufism? What does a sufi want to achieve by the whole exercise of *fanā* and *jam'*? What is his ultimate purpose and end?

One answer to this question is that the ultimate end is the perfection of servant-ship (*'ubūdīyah*). Man is a servant of God, and *taṣawwuf* wants nothing but to make him the most perfect servant of God. Abū Ya'qūb al-Nahrjūrī (d. 300/912) said: "True realization of servant-hood (*'ubūdīyah*) depends on *fanā* and *baqā*". Commenting on this Hujwerī says: "Unless the servant disclaims any credit whatsoever in his achievements, he is not sincere in his service. This disclaimer that man has no part in what he does is *fanā*, and acquiring sicncertiy in service is *baqā*". He quotes the words of Abū Sa'īd al-Kharrāz (d. 277/890): "*Fanā* is to cease perceiving the performance of service (*'ubūdīyah*) and *baqā'* is the subsistence of the servant in the vision of God." Explaining them he writes: "Man becomes perfect servant only when he ceases to see his own role (*kirdār*), and passes away from seeing his own action, and is engrossed (*bāqī*) in seeing the grace of God so much so that all his works are referred to God, not him".[74]

Three things are very clear from these quotations and their explanation which Hujwerī has offered. One, the purpose of the whole exercise of *fanā'* and *baqā'* is the perfect realization of what man, in fact, is: a servant of God. Two, this purpose is not realized unless one stops attributing one's works and achievements to oneself and considers them simply a grace of God, that is, unless one sees only the will of God in action forgetting completely his own will and action. This is what Qushayrī calls *shuhūd al-rubūbīyah,* the experience (*ḥaqīqah*) which sufis want to achieve and without which obedience to the *Sharī'ah* is not complete. He wirtes:

> "*Al-Sharīah* is the command to observe (the duties of) servant-ship and *al-ḥaqīqah* is to see (the operation) of Lordship. Every observance of the *Sharī'ah* which is not associated with the

ḥaqīqah is unacceptable; in the same way every *ḥaqīqah* which is not controlled by the *Sharīah* is unacceptable. *Sharī'ah* comes with obligations on the people, and *ḥaqīqah* makes them aware of God's operation. Sharī'ah is to serve God, *ḥaqīqah* is to see Him (in action). Sharī'ah is to do what God has commanded and *ḥqīqah* is to see what He has determined and destined, kept hidden or made visible".[75]

Does this *shuhūd al-rubūbiyah* or realization of *ḥaqīqah* mean the negation of human will altogether, and the affirmation of the sole will of God? Statements of the sufis seem to support it, but Sarrāj cautions us against it, saying that this is not the belief of the sufi community, though some have fallen in this heresy (*bid'ah*).[76]

The third thing to be noted in this view is that the experience which is called *ḥaqīqah* or *shuhūd al-rubūbīyah* is not an experience of absolute oneness or bare unity, nor does it involve the total suppression of the rational consciousness. It only means that the sufi ceases to be conscious of his will under the overwhelming consciousness of the will of God, and affirms that alone.

It may be noted here that for the realization of *'ubūd īyah*, not every sufi considers the attainment of the second degree *fanā* to be necessary – the *fanā* in which one is completely unconscious of oneself and the world around. The *shuhūd al-rubūbīyah* that one attains at the first stage is enough for it. Shaykh 'Abd al-Qāhir b. 'Abdullāh al-Suhrwardī (d. 563/1168) writes in his famous work on sufism *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*: "For *fanā'* it is not necessary that one should be completely unconscious (of the world around). To be sure some people do lose consciousness, but this is not at all necessary for *fanā*".[77]

The second view on the subject is that the end of the sufi is not only the psychological experience called *shuhūd al-rubūbīyah*, but the realization of the truth that there is nothing in existence other than God and His acts.[78] The perception of

this truth in super-rational illumination (*mukāshafah*) is, according to Ghazālī, the ultimate goal of *taṣawwuf*. He has worked out a whole philosophy on the basis of this experience. Ibn Arabī's *waḥdat al-wujūd* that being is one and identical with God, and whatever there is in the world is His manifestation or determination, is another truth whose realization is the goal of *taṣawwuf*, and the end of the whole exercise of *fanā'* and *jam'*.

In the view of shaykh 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī al-Harwī (d. 481/1088) the end of *taṣawwuf* is neither the realization of *'ubūdiyah* nor the attainment of *ma'rifah*, either in the sense of Ghazali or in the sense of Ibn 'Arabī. The end of *taṣawwuf* is the experience of *jam'* itself, which the shaykh also calls *tawḥīd*. It is absorption in that experience which is the end of *taṣawwuf*.[79]

Sufi Ideal of Life

The ideal of life which sufis developed was determined besides the Qur'ān and the Sunnah by the *ṭarīqah* they conceived, and the view of reality they held. The role that various factors played in the matter varied from person to person, and from age to age. In the early days of *taṣawwuf*, however, the most important role was played by the sufi *ṭarīqah*, particularly the effort to secure *kashf* and illumination, attain *fanā* and *jam'*. The severe discipline, the austere practices, the reduction of food, drink, sleep and social contact to the minimum, retirement to solitude, concentration on *dhikr*, innovation of new formulas for the purpose and the reinterpretation of the old ones, and the whole-time absorption in *dhikr* and contemplation, all were geared to this end.

This also explains how in most cases the sufi ideal has been an individualistic and other-worldly ideal. In the formative period of the third and the fourth centuries the ideal sufi was one who had no property or money, who did not earn his living, who kept on fasting, stayed days and night without

food, and when he could not bear hunger went out and begged for some food. Yusuf b. Isbāṭ inherited seventy thousand dirham from his father, but gave it all away, and kept nothing for himself. He lived by making hats from palm leaves and selling them.[80] Abū Yazīd was asked what did he live on when he did nothing to earn. He replied: "My Lord feeds the dogs and the pigs. Do you think He would not feed Abū Yazīd?".[81] The view that sufis generally held, Sarrāj states, was that earning the livelihood was only a concession (*rukhṣah*) allowed for those who could not trust God enough.[82] Sahl b. 'Abdullāh al-Tustarī said that for those who put their trust in God it was not permitted to engage in earning, except with the intention to follow the sunnah.[83] That is why Dhu I-Nun said: "When the gnostic feels the need to earn his living he is worthless".[84]

To abstain from earning and go on without food as many days as one could was the aspiration of every sufi, and the measure of his stature. Abū 'Uthmān al-Maghribī expected a *rabbānī* to eat only once in forty days, and a *ṣamadānī* only once in eighty days.[85] But, on the other hand, if sufis could not bear hunger, they did not shy from begging. When for example, Abū Sa'īd al-Kharrāz could not bear hunger, he would spread his hands and say: 'Something, for God's sake!".[86] And Junayd's teacher Abū Ja'far al-Ḥaddād would earn a dinar per day, but give it to the poor, and go out after the sun-set to one or two doors and begg for food.[87]

Sufis were similarly expected to abstain from marriage which was regarded as an involvement in the world, and indulgence into the pleasures of the body, permitted only as a concession for the weak. Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī (d. 215/830) said: "One who seeks three things gives himself to the world: who works for livelihood, marries a woman, or writes the hadith. I am not aware of any friend who married and could maintain his status".[88] To justify the obvious departure in this respect from the ideal of the Prophet and the Elders, sufis found out a hadith which Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996) has noted in these words: "After two centuries, celibacy will be

permitted for my Ummah. You would do better to have a cat or a dog than to have a son".[89] Suhrawardī quotes another hadith: "The best of you after two hundred years would be the one who will be light at both the ends (*khafīf al-ḥādhdh*). He was asked who was light at both the ends, he said: "One who has neither parents nor children".[90]

A view different from this was held by Junayd. He was married and is reported to have said: "I need a wife just as I need food".[91] But even he did not like his disciples to accept a public office. He expressed strong resentment when his pupil, Ruwaym (d. 303/915) took up the job of a judge (*qāḍī*).[92] Changes similar to the one noted were made in other parts of the Islamic ideal. For instance, *jihād* as an struggle against evil forces of society is held by the *Qur'ān* and the hadīth as a great meritorious act better than Hajj and fasting and all superorgatory prayers. But sufism came out with the idea that *jihād* against the self was a greater *jihād* than *jihād* against the enemies of Islam[1]. However, the original view of the Qur'ān and Sunnah was also held by a number of sufis in the past, as it has been held in modern times. The names of Sayyed Aḥmad and Shāh Ismā'īl (d. 1246/1830) of India, Amīr 'Abd al-Qādir of Algeria (d. 1300/1883), Muḥammad Aḥmad Mahdi of Sudan (d. 1302/1885), Sidī Aḥmad al-Sharīf al-Sanūsī of Tunisia (d. 1351/1932), and Shaykh Shāmil of Tajikistan are a few out of many in the last two hundred years.

We cannot go here into the other changes that were introduced by the sufis into the Prophetic ideal of life as a result of their *ṭarīqah*, their experience of *fanā* and *jam'*, their view of *kashf* and its efficacy, and finally their view of reality and theosophy. That is a vast subject; we cannot even touch on it here.

Sufi Literature

Of the earliest literature on sufism two are biographical: the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah* of Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d.

412/1021) and the *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* of Abū Nu'aym al-Isphahānī (d. 430/1028). Sulamī was a recognized sufi shaykh; Abū Nu'aym, on the other hand, was primarily a scholar of ḥadīth (*muḥaddith*), but was inclined to *taṣawwuf* and might well have been a practicing sufi. However, no one draws a clear line between the ascetic-devotee and the sufi. The former mentions Fuḍayl b. 'Iyāḍ among the sufis, the latter even goes further and includes the Companions of the Prophet as well as the *a'immah* of Islam among the list.

Both present sufis as the most pious men of the Muslim Community, and as the most faithful representative of the Islamic ideal. The former claim may be justified provided one has before him the sufis mentioned in their works, and compares them with the common run of the community and does not include the scholars of hadith and fiqh like Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150/761), Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795), Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'I (d. 204/819), 'Abdullaāh b. Mubārak (d. 181/797), Sufyān al-Thawri (d. 160/776), Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (d. 250/870), and a host of others like them in the list. The tendency to exalt the sufi *shuyūkh* over other religious leaders sometimes crosses all bounds in sufi biographical writings. 'Aṭṭār, for instance, presents al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī as realizing, after a discussion with Rābi'ah al-Baṣrīyah, that she was more sincere in her devotion than him.[94] It may be noted that Rābi'ah was hardly ten years old when Ḥasan died; she had yet to grow up, play on flute, repent from it, and then embark on the sufi course. The second claim that the sufis are the most faithful representative of the Islamic ideal is much more difficult to accept. The most that can be said is that barring certain notable exceptions sufis in general represent the contemplative aspect of the Islamic ideal.

Another category of the earliest literature is introduction to *taṣawwuf*. One can count in this category the *Kitāb al-Luma'* of Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988), *al-Ta 'arruf* of Abū Bakr al-Kalābādhī (d. 380/990), *Qūt-al-Qulūb* of Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī

(d. 386/996), *al-Risālah* of Abū l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) and *Kashf al-Mahjūb* of Abū'Uthmān Hujwirī (d. 465/1072). They have hundred fifty to two hundred years of the history of sufism before them, and they have to take into consideration the problems which their community encountered on account of the *shaṭhāt* of some of their colleagues, for which some of them were banished and some were hanged. They have shown and rightly that sufis in general have the same beliefs as the rest of the Ahl al-Sunnah. Kalābādhī, in particular goes over all the articles of creed, one by one, and shows that the sufis hold the same views as the theologians of the Ahl al-Sunnah. They try to show that the *taṣawwuf* which their acknowledged leaders have expounded is fully supported by the Qur'an and Sunnah, that there is nothing wrong in the *ṭarīqah* which they have worked out, that though their terminology is new, it presents ideas completely within the limits of the Sharī'ah, that the knowledge (*ma'rifah*) which they claim either follows from the texts of the Qur'ān and the hadith or are elaborations on them which they call allusions (*ishārāt*), that *taṣawwuf* is the inner essence of Islam, and that sufis are the best representatives of the Islamic values.

They are certainly aware of the difference between the piety of asceticism and devotion and the piety of *taṣawwuf*, and recognize it. But they do not recognize that there is a difference between the prophetic love and the sufi love, that the experience of *fanā* and *jam'* which is the essential and distinctive part of the sufi *ṭarīqah* is not found in the Prophetic *ṭarīqah*. This point is only recognized for the first time by Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī in the tenth / sixteenth century and elaborated by Shāh Ismā'īl[95] (d. 1246/1830). They also see no difference between the *zuhd*, asceticism which sufis stand for and the *zuhd* which is found in the life of the Prophet and his Companions. Similarly, they see no need for any specific scriptural evidence for the changes sufis have introduced in the words and ways of doing *dhikr*, or giving the words the meaning they have in their contemplation. As for the practices, experiences and utterances of some sufis that conflict with the

Sharī'ah, they try to show that in most cases the difference is merely linguistic, while in some there is a deviation from the main stream of *taṣawwuf*. Sarrāj, particularly, has addressed to such issues and succeeded in clarifying a lot of confusion and misunderstanding.[96]

The *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* of Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) is a different kind of work. Ghazālī is not only concerned with explaining and defending sufi concepts and practices as are Sarrāj, Qushayrī and Hujwirī. He goes far beyond, and tries to show that sufism is the essence of Islam, the real and the most authentic Islam. To perform this task, Ghazālī does three things. One, he develops a concept of knowledge in which he gives mystic illumination (*'ilm al-mukāshafah*) a deciding position vis-à-vis reason and revelation, both in the interpretation of faith and the determination of values. Second, in agreement with the sufi experience of *fanā* and *jam'* he works out a view of reality which he states briefly in some parts of the *Iḥyā'* but more fully in his other books, such as *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā* and *Mishkāt al-Anwār*. Third, drawing upon his knowledge of philosophy and ethics he develops a concept of the ultimate goal of human life, which he uses to evaluate different goods and activities.

It is on the basis of his doctrines regarding knowledge, reality and the goal of human life that Ghazālī attempted the first most thorough and systematic interpretation of Islam in history. Another book that belongs to this category is the *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah* of Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240). Like Ghazālī, Ibn Arabi also works at two different levels in his book, one a popular level where he discusses things for the common man, and the other a deeper level where he sets forth his real ideas for the elite. For the systematic presentation of the latter, however, he reserves his most commented book, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*.

Ghazālī has been held as the representative of the Sunnī *taṣawwuf* and Ibn'Arabī as the representative of the philosophical *taṣawwuf* by a number of Arab writers in our

times.[97] By Sunni *taṣawwuf* they mean the sufism which is concerned primarily with *khulq,* moral and spiritual virtues, and represents most faithfully the Islamic ideal of life as expounded in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. In forming their estimate of Ghazālī, however, they do not take into consideration his esoteric writings. The judgment whether the *taṣawwuf* of any particular sufi is *sunnī* should depend not on the ground that its concern is practical rather than speculative, but on some other grounds. First, whether, it holds *'ibādah* as explained in the beginning, to be the goal of man, and makes its *ṭarīqah* and its experience of *fanā* and *jam'* subservient to that goal; second, whether, it upholds in actual operation the supremacy of the prophetic revelation over the mystic *kashf;* and, finally, whether the view of reality that it works out is consistent with the basic truths of Islamic faith and life as stated in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. How far Ghazālī's *taṣawwuf* satisfies these conditions is a problem for investigation.

Sufi writers beginning from Sarrāj have critically reviewed some ideas and practices of their sufi masters. In a section in the *Iḥyā',* Ghazālī has also criticized some practices of the sufis along with the practices of the other sections of society. But all this self-criticism is mostly concerned with matters of detail and with individual excesses. A detailed review of the principal sufi practices is made for the first time by the famous hadith scholar Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 598/1200). He examines various aspects of the sufi life and *ṭarīqah* such as their attitude to the goods of this life, money and property, their view of marriage and family, their war against the self, their retirement into seclusion, their use of woolen and rugged clothes, their indulgence into *simā',* ecstasy, mystical dance, *shaṭḥ* and extravagant claims, and their view of trust (*tawakkul*) and resignation (*riḍā*). Ibn al-Jawzī refers in particular to the views of Ghazālī and joins issue with him on juristic lines.[98]

Ibn Taymīyah (d. 728/1327) in his review of sufism goes over the whole gamut of mystical stations (*maqāmāt*). On love, particularly he writes besides various short notes a whole tract.

His disciple Ibn Qayyam (d. 751/1350) pursues the discussion on *maqāmāt* and *aḥwāl* still further in his voluminous commentary *Madārij al-Sālikīn* on Shaykh al-Islām 'Abdullāh al-Ansāri's (d. 481/1088) most comprehensive but concise statement, *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn*, ever written on the subject. Ibn Taymiyah denounces the innovations that sufis introduced in *dhikr* and in other parts of their *ṭarīqah*, such as retirement to cloisters (*khalāwi*) but he does not censure the experience of *fanā* and *jam'* as such. He only criticizes its interpretation on the *wujūdī*, monistic lines like the one by Ibn'Arabī, or *ḥulūlī*, incarnationistic lines by Ḥallāj. It is to these two theosophical doctrines that Ibn Taymīyah directs his most vehement criticism.[99]

The main object of the critical review of sufism before all these three writers was not negative. They were much more concerned with bringing out the view of the Qur'ān, Sunnah, Elders of Islam, and the first sufi masters that were close to the Islamic sources. Ibn Taymīyah, in particular, makes it a point to explain the basic concepts of Prophetic *ṭarīqah* and piety, such as *qurb*, intimate relation with God, *walāyah*, the patronage of God, the grades of the *awliyā'*, and their *karāmah*, power to work miracles. Similarly, the most profound and balanced discussion on the concept of *'ibādah* and *'ubūdīyah* in the entire Islamic literature comes from his pen.[100]

Among sufis themselves the most profound reassessment of sufism and its relation with the Prophetic Islam comes from the famous Naqshbandī sufi and the renovator of the *ṭarīqah* Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1034/624). The most essential feature of sufism, he says, is the experience of *fanā* and *baqā*, which he does not hesitate to say that it is no part of the Prophetic *ṭarīqah*. There are, therefore, two ways to God, The Prophetic way (*ṭarīqah nubūwat*) and the sufi way (*ṭarīqah walāyat*). The experience of *fanā* and *baqā*, he further says, is not the end in itself, it is only a means to realize utmost sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*) in performing the service (*'ibādah*) to God. For him the experience of *farq*, difference, rather than *jam'*,

union is the end of the sufi journey (*sulūk*). He goes on to point out in detail the characteristics that mark the experiences of *jam'* and *farq*. The oneness (*waḥdat*) that the sufi experiences in the second stage of *fanā'*, he says, is only a matter of perception (*shuhūd*), in reality God is completely other than the world. On the basis of this realization he expounds a theosophy called *waḥdat al-shuhūd* as distinguished from the theosophy of *waḥdat al-wujūd* of Ibn 'Arabī which he subjects to criticism on rational as well as mystical grounds.[101]

Walīy Allāh (d. 1176/1762) the most outstanding Islamic scholar, thinker and sufi of his time agrees with Sirhindī on all the above points except his criticism of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. His point is that *waḥdat al-wujūd*, interpreted properly would not conflict with the fundamentals of Islam. In fact, he attempted a new interpretation of the doctrine, as we shall see. He also wrote a tract to show that there is no substantial difference between *waḥdat al-wuj ūd*, properly explained, and the *waḥdat al-shuhūd* of Sirhindī.[102] This gave rise to a controversy among later sufis whether there is or there is no difference between the two doctrines. Shāh Ismā'īl (d. 1246/1830), a member of Walīy Allāhs' family, a scholar and sufi trained in the order both of Sirhindī and Walīy Allāh, whom we have mentioned earlier, discussed at length the difference between the passionate love of sufism, and the composed love of faith, and between the *ṭarīqah* of the sufis and the *ṭarīqah* of the Prophet. He also worked out a doctrine, which is very close to the doctrine of Sirhindī.[103]

Notes and References:

1. The reference is to the Qur'ānic verse 17:1: "Holy is He Who carried His servant (*'abd*) by right from the Holy Mosque (in Mecca) to the Further Mosque (*in Jerusalem*) whose surroundings We have blessed that We might show him some of Our signs. Indeed He alone is All-Hearing All-Seeing".
2. 'Aishah said that the religious act that he (the Prophet) liked most was the one which one would go on doing regularly. (*Saḥīḥ Bukhārī* 3:31; *Saḥīḥ Muslim* 785)
3. Ibn Mas'ud reports that the Prophet said: 'Those who torture themselves are doomed," and repeated these words thrice (*Saḥīh Muslim* 2670). Abu Hurayrah reports that the Prophet said: 'Islam is an easy religion. If you stretch it too much it will operpower you. Take it easy; act upon it properly and hope for the best. Engage in prayer in the morining and evening, and early night. Follow the middle path, follow the middle path. You will reach the destination." (*Bukhari*: 1/87, 88, 11:254, 255)
4. See Quranic verses: 4: 172, 11:61, 2: 186,39:3, 96:19, 83:28
5. See Qur'anic verses: 2:21, 183, 24:52 etc. The Prophet said: "Keep away (*ittaqī*) from things forbidden you will be the best devotee of God" (*Mishkāt*: al-Riqāq quoting from *Tirmidhī*).
6. The Prophet said: "One does not attain true piety (*taqwā*) untill he avoids what makes the heart uneasy". (*Bukhāri*: k. *al-Imān*)
7. The Prophet said: 'One Cannot be truly pious (*muṭṭaqī*) unless he avoids even harmless things which may lead him to something wrong." (*Tirmidhi*: hadith 594).
8. The Prophet said: "*Ihsān* is that you worship (*ta'bud*) God as if you see Him. If you cannot see Him, He indeed sees you." (*Bukhāri*, hadith : 50)
9. See also Qur'ānic verses: 2:1-4, 2:83, 22:32, 5:8, 33:70

10. See also verses: 11:114-115, 12:90, 7:56, 51:15-19
11. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,* ṣayd :57; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd,* aḍāhī: 11; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, ḍaḥāyā:* 22, 26, 27; *Sunan Ibn Mājah, dhabā'ih*:3.
12. Abdur-Rahman Badawī, *Al-Taṣawwuf al-Islāmī min al-Bidāyah ilā Nihāyat al-Qarn al-Thānī,* Wakalat al-Matbū'āt, Kuwait, 1975, p.198
13. Ibid, p. 205
14. Ibid, p. 209
15. Abū Nu'ayn, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* (Beirut, Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabī, 1980) Vol. VIII pp. 99-100
16. Ibid, Vol. VI p. 163
17. 'Aṭṭar Farīd al-Dīn, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, with preface by Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb, Tehran, 1331 A.H., p. 73.
18. Al-Zubaydī, *Itḥāf al-S'ādah al-Muttaqīn bi Sharḥ Asrār Iḥyā 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, n.d. Vol. IX, P. 688.
19. In the Qur'ān we have: "Those who spend in the way of Allah both in affluence and hardship. Who restrain their anger and forgive others, Allah loves such good-doers" (3:134)
20. Al-Qushayrī, Abu l-Qāsim Abd al-Karīm, *Tartib al-Sulūk,* ed. Fritz, Meier, ORIENS, Vol. 16(1963) p. 15.
21. Al-Ghazālī, Abu Hāmid Muhammad, *Ihyā 'Ulūm al-Din* (Maktabat al-Halabi, Cairo, 1358/1939), Vo. 2. III. p. 73
22. Al-Kalābādhī, Abu Bakr Muḥammad, *Kitab al-Ta'arruf li Madhhab Ahl al-Tasawwuf,* ed. Dr. 'Abd al-Halīm Maḥmūd and Tāhā 'Abd al-Baqi Surūr (al-Halabī, Cairo, 1380/1990), p. 89. The dates of Abul l-Hasan Muḥammad b. Ahmad al-Farisi were not available.
23. Ghazālī, Ihyā', opt. cit. Vol. III, p. 73
24. Ibid, Vol. III, pp. 73-4
25. Al- Qushayrī, Abu l-Qāsim Abd al-Karīm, *al-Risālah al-Qushayriyah,* ed. Dr. Abd al-Halim Mahmud and Muhammad b. al-Sharīf (Dar al-Kutub al-Hadith, Cairo, 1972), p. 94

26. Ibid, p. 377
27. Qushayri, *Tartīb al-Suluk,* opt. cit. p. 16
28. Wali Allah, Shah, *al- Qawl al-Jamil* (kutub Khana Aziziyah, Deo-band, n.d.), p.29
29. Al-Sarrāj, Abu Nasr, *Kitāb al-Luma'*, ed. Abd al-Ḥalim Mahmud and Taha Abd al-Baqi Surur (Dar al-Kutub al-Hadith, Cairo, 1380/1960), p. 65
30. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah,* opt. p. 204
31. Ibn Qyyim, *Madārij al-Sālikīn,* ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiqī (Matba at al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah, Cairo, 1375/1955), Vol. II p. 171
32. Qushayrī, *al-Risalah,* p. 207
33. Ghazalī, *Ihya,* opt. cit. Vol. IV, pt. 3, 337-345
34. Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-Sālikīn,* opt. cit, Vol. II, pp. 41 ff.
35. Qushayrī, al-Risālah, pp. 228-9
36. Ibid, p. 229
37. Ibid, p. 261
38. 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī, *Ghunyat al-Ṭālibīn,* (Maktabat al-Halabi, Cairo, 1375/1956) Vol. II p. 158)
39. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah,* opt. cit., p. 231
40. Ibid, p. 225
41. Hujwirī, Ali b. 'Uthmān, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb,* ed. V. A. Zukovsky with Persian trans. of the Russian Introduction by M. Abbasi, Tehran, 1926, p. 316
42. Kalābādhī, *al-Ta 'arruf,* opt. cit. p. 131
43. Sarrāj, *K. Al-Luma',* opt. cit. p. 381
44. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah,* p. 236
45. Sarrāj, *K. al-Luma',* p. 381
46. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah,* p. 220; Jāmī, Abd Al-Raḥmān, *Nafaḥāt al-Uns* (Nawalkishore, Lucknow, 1328/1910), p. 79
47. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badwī, *Shaṭḥāt al-Ṣūfīyah,* Wakalat al-Matbu'at, Kuwait, 1996, p. 147
48. Qushayrī, al-Risālah, opt. cit., p. 518, Kalabādhī, *al-Ta'arruf* opt. cit., p. 163
49. Kalābādhī, *al-Ta'arruf,* p. 131

50. Sarrāj, *K. al-Luma'*, opt. cit., p. 488
51. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah,* p. 226
52. Al-Suhrawardī, *'Abd al-Qāhir, 'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* (Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Beirut, 1966), p. 524
53. Nicholson, R.A., *Mystics of Islam* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1966), p. 149
54. Hujwirī, *Kashf al-Mahjub,* p. 233
55. See Ansari, Abdul Haq, *Sufism and Sharī'ah* (Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 1986), p. 40
56. Ibid, pp. 441-45
57. Ibid, pp. 52-53
58. Kalābādhī, al-Ta'arruf, opt. cit. p. 126
59. Ibid, p. 131
60. Ilujwirī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, opt. cit. pp. 316-7
61. Sarrāj, *K. al-Luma'*, opt. cit. p. 543
62. Ibid, p. 542
63. Ibid, p. 552
64. Hujwiri, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb,* opt. cit., p. 315
65. Shah Muḥammad Ismā'īl, *'Abaqāt,* (Karachi, al-Majlis al-'Ilmī, 1380 A. H./1960 AD.), p. 4
66. Ghazālī, *Iḥyā,* Vol. III, pp. 18-22
67. Walīy Allāh, *Fuyūḍ al-Ḥaramayn,* Urdu trans., Ghulam Sarwar, 1957, Sindh Sagar Academy, Lahore, p. 63
68. Sarrāj, *K. al-Luma'*, op. cit. p. 259, 524
69. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah,* p. 96
70. Ibid, p. 118
71. For the ḥaḍīth see *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī,* adab: 18, 38; *Saḥīḥ Muslim,* faḍā'il: 65; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd,* adab: 145; *Sunan al-Timidhī,* birr: 13
72. Sarrāj, *K. al-Luman'*, p. 265-6
73. See the discussion on *kashf* by Dr. 'Abd al-Bārī, former Professor of philosophy and ideology, Usmania University, Hyderabad in his book *Tajdīd Taṣawwuf wa Sulūk* (Maktabah al-Furqān, Lucknow, 2nd ed. 1949) pp. 88 ff. which is an exposition of the views of his preceptior, the famous sufi and scholar Shaykh Ashraf'Alī Thānawī (d. 1362/1493).

74. Hujwerī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb,* p .316
75. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah,* p. 261
76. Sarrāj, *K. al-Luma',* pp. 531-2
77. Suhrawardī, *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif,* opt. cit. p. 521
78. Ghazālī, *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Asmā Allah al-Ḥusnā,* (Cairo Maktabat al-Jundi), p. 45; *Iḥyā,* Vol. iv p. 319
79. 'Abdullāh al-Anṣāri al-Harwī, *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn,* with commentary by Iskandarī, (Cairo, Institute Francais d. Archiologic Orientale, 1954) p. 227
80. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah,* p. 543
81. Suharawardi, *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif,* p. 159
82. Sarrāj, *K. Al-Luma',* p. 524
83. Kalābādhī, *al-Ta'arruf,* p. 85
84. Sarrāj, *K. al-Luma',* 524
85. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah,* p. 375
86. Suhrawardī, *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif,* opt. cit., p. 150
87. Ibid, p. 150
88. Ibid, p. 165
89. Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-Qulūb* (Maktabah al-Halabi, Cairo, 1381/1961), Vol. II, p. 492
90. Suhrawardī, *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif,* opt. cit. p. 165
91. Abu Talib al-Makki, *Qut al-Qulub,* opt. cit. Vol. II. P. 495
92. Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilyat al-'Awliyā,* (Beirut, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1980) Vol. x, p. 268
93. Ibn Taymīyah says that this hadith has no basis and is not reported by any important scholar. Al- Ḥāfiz al-'Irāqī says that this hadith has been reported by a weak chain of narrators from Jābir. Ibn Ḥajar says that it is a saying of Ibrāhīm b. 'Aylah (See the text and the note on page 73 of Ibn Taymiyah's book *"Al-Furqān bayn Awliyā' al-Raḥmān wa Awliyā al-Shayṭān,* ed. I. Maḥmud A. Faiz (Dar al-Fikr, n.d.)
94. 'Attār, Tadhkirat *al-Awliyā,'* opt. cit. Vol. I, p. 70
95. See my *Sufism and Sharīah,* opt. cit. pp. 63-70
96. Sarrāj, *K. al-Luma',* opt. cit. pp. 516-555

97. See Dr. 'Abd al-Qādir Maḥmūd, *Al-Falsafah al-Ṣūfīyah fi l-Islām*, (Cairo, Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, 1967), pp. 155, 199 ff; Dr. Ibrāhim Madkūr Buyūmī, *Fi l-Falsafat al-Islāmīyah Manhajihī wa Taṭbīqihī, Cairo,* pp. 67; Dr. Abul Wafā al-Ghanīmī al-taftāẓānī , *Madkhal ila al Taṣawwūf al-Islāmī*, Cairo, 1976, p. 182 ff; and Dr. Cara De Vu, *al-Ghazālī*, Arabic Trans. by 'Ādil Zuaytar, Cairo, 1959, pp. 159, 184
98. See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbīs Iblīs* (Beirut, al-Muniriyah, 1368 A.H.) pp. 150-386
99. See my *Ṣufism and Sharī'ah,* opt. cit. pp. 131-8
100. See Ibn Taymīyah, *Risālat al-'Ubūdīyah* ed. Khalid Abd al-Latif al-Ilmi, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1987
101. See infra, ch. vi, pp.
102. Walīy Allāh, *al- Tafhīmāt al-Ilāhīyah* (ed. Ghulam Mustafa al-Qāsimī, Hyderabad, Pakistan, 1387/1967), Vol. II, pp. 261-284
103. See *infra,* ch. VIII pp.

Chapter Two

Abū Yazīd: Description of Mystic Experience

Abū Yazīd is one of those few great founders of Sufism in the third century Hijrah who have exercised tremendous influence on the development of sufi thought and practice throughout the ages. One hardly gets a work on Sufism which does not quote from him. All orders of Sufism hold him in great esteem. Hujwerī counts him among the ten greatest leaders of Sufism.[1] Junayd, commonly regarded as the leader of the sufi community (*Sayyid al-Ṭā'ifah*), wrote a commentary on his ecstatic utterances (*shaṭḥāt*), which indicates the importance he attached to him.[2] Even a critic of Sufism like Ibn Taymīyah mentions his name with respect whenever he refers to him in his writings[3].

Though some details regarding Abū Yazīd's life, experiences and ideas are found in various sufi biographical works,[4] the major work on him is the *Kitāb al-Nūr fī Kalimāt Abī Yazīd Ṭayfūr* by Abu I-Faḍl Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Sahlajī (389/ 998-9 – 476/984) edited by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī under the title *Shaṭḥāt al-Ṣūfīyah*. Thanks to this record we can have a complete view of the sufi experience in its earliest form and trace out the mystical development of Abū Yazīd through all the stages, a task which is all nigh impossible in case of other Sufis. Another thing of much more importance is that the experiences of Abū Yazīd as described in these sources are almost completely free from reflective thought. People have often misunderstood these experiences and taken them as an expression of blatant pantheism. This mistake has arisen, as we intend to show, first due to failure in distinguishing between the description of an experience and the reflection on it. Abū Yazīd describes his experiences, he does not expound a view of

reality. It has arisen, on the second place, due to concentration of the writers on the middle phase of Abū Yazīd's mystical development and almost total neglect of the final phase.

Abū Yazīd was born at Bistam in the Iranian province of Jumis. His grand-father, Shorasan was a Zoroastrian, who, moved by the piety of a Muslim friend, embraced Islam[5]. His father 'Īsā was a deeply religious person, extremely careful about things he and his family would have at their meals[6]. Abū Yazīd was the second of his three sons, the eldest was Adam and the youngest was 'Alī. All have been reported to be sincere devotees and ascetics (*'ubbād wa zuhhād*)[7]. Abū Yazīd had little formal education. His nephew and disciple, Abū Mūsā b. Ādam, who attended to his personal affairs and looked after his cloister (*ṣawma'ah*) says that Abū Yazīd was *ummī*[8], uneducated. But by the end of his life he had learned the Qur'ān by heart[9]. His mother tongue was Persian, part of his sayings recorded in Arabic in our sources are probably translations from Persian[10].

At the age of ten, Abū Yazīd went out from Bisṭām and spent thirty years at different places in Syria with different sufi masters whose number is given as three hundred thirteen, and Ja'far ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq is counted among them[11]. This is simply incorrect; for Ja'far al-Ṣā'diq died in 148/765, years before Abū Yazīd was born. Abū Yazīd's death which occurred at the age of seventy three or seventy four is put by Sahlajī in 234/847[12], whereas all other authorities put it in the year 261/875[13]. This means that he was born in 161/778 or 187/803, thirty nine or at least thirteen years after al-Ṣādiq's death. The number of Abū Yazīd's teachers also does not seem to be true; it has been maneuvered with a view to matching the number of the Companions of the Prophet that participated in the battle of Badr in 2/624, just to bolster up the prestige of Abū Yazīd. Sahlajī compiled his book about two hundred years after Abū Yazīd's death, it is not surprising, therefore, if it has such stories. Sahlajī does not carefully examine his material. He is given to extol his hero and avoid producing things that may

adversely affect his prestige. For instance, he mentions, that Junayd defended[14] Abu Yazīd and that Dhu 'l-Nūn praised[15] his attainments, but drops out the comments which Junayd and Shiblī have made on his experiences as Sarrāj has recorded.[16]

Sarrāj says that Abū Yazīd had a teacher by the name of Abū 'Alī al-Sindī who taught him how to attain pure union and other truths (*al-tawḥīd wa l-ḥaqā'q*) while Abū Yaīd taught him how to perform his obligatory duties[17]. Nicholson thinks that this Abū 'Alī was an Indian from the western province of Sind[18]. Arberry is of the view that he was most probably from a village called Sind in Khurasan which Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī mentions in his geographical dictionary, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*[19]. More recently, Zaehner has defended the former view. He believes that Abū 'Alī was an Indian scholar converted to Islam; he also thinks that the *tawḥīd* which he taught Abū Yazīd was the doctrine of the non-dualist Vedanta which was formulated and preached by Shanker (d.820 A.D), an elder contemporary of Abū Yazīd[20]. I will return to this point later.

Treading The Sufi Path (*Sulūk*)

We have noted above that Abū Yazīd left Bistām for Syria at an early age and gave himself to devotion. 'Aṭṭār mentions that once reciting the Qur'ān when Abū Yazīd reached the verse, "Show gratitude to Me and to your parents" (31:14), he went to his mother and said that he was not able to meet the demands of this verse. Either he would devote himself to God or serve his parents, he could not do both the duties together. His mother solved his difficulty by absolving him of his duties to her and let him devote himself exclusively to God[21]. Thus freed, Abū Yazīd engaged himself in prayer and *dhikr*. He had great regard for prayers. He had reserved a suit of clothes and a pair of shoes for them, which he did not use for any other purpose[22]. And every time he took up *dhikr* he washed his mouth out of deep reverence and awe that he had for God[23].

Abū Yazīd had vowed to live a life of poverty and hunger[24], and stored nothing for the morrow. Once while he was engaged in his prayers, he did not get the pleasure he used to have. He turned to Abū Mūsā, his attendant, and enquired what was there in the house, Abu Musa made a search and reported that there was a sack of grapes in the house. Abū Yazīd ordered that it should be immediately removed and distributed among the poor[25]. At the time of his death he had nothing except a shirt on his body, that, too, had been borrowed and was returned after his death[26]. Once when he was asked as to how did he attain what he had attained he replied: "I gathered all the things of the world, tied them with the cord of contentment, put them in the catapult of sincerity and threw them in the sea of despair for not to return ever. Then I felt relieved"[27].

Sahlajī does not mention that Abū Yazīd was married. But Abū Nu'aym says that he had a wife and records some words of Abū Yazīd that were related by her[28]. However, Abū Yazīd did not seem to have much to do with his wife. In fact, he was once going to pray to God to relieve him of caring for food and woman when he remembered that the Prophet had not prayed for it, and in difference to him gave up the idea. But God, he says, took note of his wish and saved him from caring for woman. It was all the same whether a woman faced him or a wall[29].

To secure concentration of mind in devotion Abū Yazīd shut himself in a house and closed all the holes so that he could not hear any voice that would cause distraction[30]. Abū Mūsā would knock at the door to tell him the timing of the prayers[31]. It is also reported that Abū Yazīd lived in a cloister (*ṣawma'ah*) and that Abū Mūsā looked after his cloister and its visitors[32]. Abū Yazīd exerted himself in *dhikr* so much that at times blood would pass with urine[33]. Jāmī says that when he offered prayers one could hear the rattling of the ribs in his chest[34]. He indulged in various ways of self-chastisement and mortification. Once he tried to subject his soul to something

but it kept on refusing. Thereupon he vowed that he would not drink water for a year. This is the least punishment, he says, he inflicted on his soul[35]. At another time he saw a beautiful red apple and said: 'What a *latīf* (nice) apple!' Thereupon God, he says, immediately admonished him: "Abū Yazīd! Were you not ashamed of putting My name (*al-Latīf*) on a fruit." Abū Yazīd says that thereafter he could not remember that Great Name (of God) for forty days, and vowed not to eat from Bistam as long as he lived[36].

Abū Yazīd was not interested in travelling. When a person asked how was it that his disciples did not derive comfort from travelling, he replied: 'My Friend is a resident not a traveller, and I stay with him and do not travel![37] He performed Hajj only once in his life and did not attempt again[38]. He fasted all the year long except on Id days which have been prohibited for fasting[39]. He immersed himself in prayer and *dhikr*, day and night, and hardly took rest. For forty years, he says, he did not lean by any wall except by the wall of the mosque or the cloister. Asked why he did not take rest and utilize the concession (*rukhṣah*) given in the Sharī'ah, he said: "Have you heard God saying: 'Whoever does good even small as a particle, shall see it' (99:7-8). Do you see any concession here?"[40] His Egyptian friend Dhu l-Nūn (d.245/847) sent to him a pillow which he had specially made for him. But he did not accept the present and returned the pillow saying: "One who is his own pillow does not need yours!" Sahlajī says that this happened in the last days of Abū Yazīd's life when he had become extremely weak and had been reduced to mere skin and bones[41].

For Abū Yazīd, religion had been reduced to two things: renunciation (*zuhd*) of the world and devotion to God, prayer and *dhikr*. Asked as to what is the *sunnah* (i.e. practices of the Prophet that he has recommended to his Ummah, without making them obligatory) and the *farīḍah* (duties that have been made obligatory) he replied: '*Sunnah* means to renounce the world, and *farīḍah* means to be in the company of God,

because all the *sunnah* speaks of renouncing the world, and the entire Book speaks of living in the company of God. He who performs the *sunnah* and the *farīḍah* becomes perfect"[42]. We have noted above that he asked his mother to relieve him of his duties to her, that even though he had a wife he had nothing to do with her, that he spent his days in a cloister away from society and abstained from earning. In the beginning he visited the sick and the bereaved, but towards the end he gave up that too[43]. However, he did feel very deeply for his neighbours, Muslims and non-Muslims alike and prayed for them much more than he prayed for himself[44].

It is quite natural that Abū Yazīd should find the Sharī'ah of the Prophet very difficult to follow. He says: "I fought against myself for thirty years and did not find anything more difficult than *al-'ilm* (the knowledge of religion as it has come down from the Prophet) and living according to it"[45]. He renounced the world, its people and things, and devoted himself exclusively to prayer and *dhikr*. This was his service to God. However, he engaged himself in this service (*'ibādah*) with all his might, with all his mind and all his heart. Asked as to when one perfects one's service (*'ubūdīyah*) to God he said: "When one does not have a will". But how is that possible? He replied: "It becomes possible when one's will, aspiration and desire all are taken into one's love of God, and one does not will until one knows what is the will of God"[46].

Abū Yazīd renounced the world, took to fasting, engaged in prayers, exerted in *dhikr* and subjected himself to severe practices for full forty years. In the end, however, he became weary and disappointed. Recounting these days he once said in his characteristic style: "God showed me first the way of farming (*al-zirā'ah*) and I sowed all kinds of prayers (*'ibādah*) in my life. Then God showed me the way of cleaning (*ṭahārah* i.e. various forms of penances and renunciation) and I tried all the ways of self-cleaning, and used all sorts of waters and washed and washed, but I could not clean my soul"[47]. On another occasion he said: 'I dived deep into the sea of works

(*a'māl*) for forty years but when I came up I found myself tied with a variety of girdles (*zunnār*)"[48]. *Zunnār* literally means the cord which Hindu and Zoroastrian priests put on themselves at the time of initiation as a token of pledge to follow their religious duties. In sufi language it is a symbol for anything that diverts the attention of the sufi from seeking God and spoils the sincerity of his love and devotion to Him.

This idea has been expressed by Abū Yazīd in different ways on various occasions. For instance: 'I have been performing *ṣalāh* for the last thirty years, but every time I pray I feel that I am still a Zoroastrian trying to cut my *zunnār*[49]. Or I watched my heart for forty years, but even after that I found it harbouring *shirk*, and its *shirk* was that it looked to things other than God'[50].

The things which Abū Yazīd counted as *zunnār* or attention to which he regarded *shirk* included everything besides God: (1) the delight (*ḥalāwah*) a devotee takes in serving God (2) the signs and miracles that God confers on him, and (3) the pleasures that he will have in Paradise. All this is other than God; therefore every thought to secure them would spoil his love for God and his sincerity in serving Him, and detain him from rising up to higher stages, and deprive him of the ultimate truth (*ma'rifah*). "The servant does not love his Creator", Abū Yazīd said, "unless he devotes himself to the pursuit and fulfilment of His wishes in secret and in open till God knows that his heart does not want anything except Him[51]. "One is given pleasure in devotion, and just because he takes delight in it he remains away from the realities of nearness (*qurb*)"[52]. Speaking of his own experience he said: "In the beginning God showed me His signs and worked miracles on my hand. But I took no interest in them. When He found me like that He opened to me the way to gnosis (*ma'rifah*)"[53]. At another time he said: "God placed me before Himself thousand times, and offered me every time (power over some part of) His kingdom. But I kept on saying: 'I don't want it'.

At last He said: 'Abū Yazīd! Do you want anything?' I said: 'I wish not to wish anything'"[54].

Abū Yazīd regards the favours of God as temptation by which God tests His devotees. "I was tested", he says, "through a number of favours. First I was offered the goods of this world, but I turned away from them. Then I was offered the blessings of the next world. At first I turned to them, but (God) cautioned me that they were traps (*khud'ah*), so I turned away from them, too. When He found that I was not duped by them, as they were no less a part of creation he opened to me the door of Divine blessings (*al-'aṭayā al-ilāhīyah*)"[55]. The same thing he put in this way: "I passed three days in renunciation, the fourth day I passed over it. The first day, I renounced the world and whatever was therein. The second day, I renounced the Hereafter and whatever was there in it. The third day I renounced everything other than God. The fourth day nothing remained except God. At that time, I think, I heard a voice saying: 'Abū Yazīd! you cannot live without me'. I said: That's what I want! Then I heard a voice saying: 'You got! You got!"[56]

Abu Yazid passed these stages, but he was not satisfied that he had attained perfect sincerity in his love and pursuit of God. He had to pass two more stages. First, he had to realize that His will to seek God and nothing other than God was not of his own initiative. God first willed in eternity that he should seek Him, whereupon he sought God. "I entertained earlier", he said "some very wrong ideas. I thought I remembered God, but in fact He remembered me before I remembered Him. I thought I sought Him and I knew Him, but, in fact, He loved me before I loved Him. I thought I served Him, but in fact He put every creature on earth at my service"[57]. Second, he had to realize that his will to seek God was not his own will but a will of God in him. "How happy," he said, "the gnostic (*al-'arif*) is over his knowledge that he exists by God's power and moves by His will. He does not bother which way God moves him, since he knows that it is His power that moves. However, by realizing

this, he does not dispense with his servant-hood"[58]. "Gnosis", he says, "is to know that all the movement and rest of the creatures is from God"[59]. Addressing God, he says: "O dear to the heart of Your friend! Thanks is from You, just as blessing is from You"[60]. With the realization that every movement is caused by God, Abū Yazīd saw that the entire world was a dead mass devoid of any will at all. He expressed that in this way: "For twelve years I was my own smith, then for five years I was my own mirror, and for one year or more I looked in between the two. Then I found in me a visible cord (*zunnār*) which I took twelve years to cut. Then I saw a hidden cord inside me which I tried for five years to cut, but did not know how to cut. At last I came to know it. Then I looked at the creation and found that they (the creatures) were all dead. Thereupon I pronounced over them four times: God is great"[61]. Explaining these words 'Aṭṭār says: "Abū Yazīd, first, spent twelve years in subjugating his self by severe penances, then he engaged in all sorts of devotional acts, prayers and *dhikr*. That he was a mirror for himself means that he was quite happy with his performance. He then realized that his reliance on his own efforts was a *zunnār*. He took another twelve years to realize that creatures have neither power nor will of their own, that they are nothing but a dead mass. Abū Yazīd then turned away from everything including himself and gave himself completely to God"[62].

Mystic Experience

By now Abū Yazīd had attained the first degree of *fanā*. He had subjugated his self, submitted it to the commands of God, immersed himself in devotion and *dhikr*, purified his love of God of all impurities, this worldly and the other-worldly, given up relying on his own efforts or taking delight in his works, and had realized that all power belonged to God, that He determined everything before anyone thought of it, and that nothing moved or did anything by itself, rather, it was God who moved or caused everything. This realization is what al-

Qushayrī, as we have noted, calls *shuhūd al-rubūbīyah*, and considers to be the first stage of *fanā*.

Abū Yazīd now moved to the next stage where he negatd his self-identity and affirmed God alone. How Abū Yazīd was able to attain it is not spelled out in our sources. A few things are, however, clear. One, he did not attain it by his own efforts, nor by following a particular path. It was a sheer grace of God. He says: "I saw the Lord in dream and asked Him how should I come to you? He replied: "Give up your self and come"[63]. Someone asked Abū Yazīd: "What is the way to God?" He said: "If you forget (all) about the way you will reach God"[64]. Another person asked him: "By what effort did you attain what you have attained?" He replied: "By nothing"[65].

In the following passage, Abū Yazīd has shed some light on the process: "I divorced the world three times and left no possibility for its return. After that I went to the Lord and prayed for His help: 'My God and Lord! I beseech You in the words of one for whom no one is left except You.' When God knew that I entreated Him from the depth of my heart, and that I had lost all hope in me, the first thing He did, responding to my prayer, was that He made me forget myself completely (*ansānī bi l-kullīyah*) and arrayed the whole creation before me. But I turned away from it"[66].

Not only did Abū Yazīd negate himself he also negated all the creation. In the following passage he describes how God made him forget himself, and then forget the whole creation, and finally drew him so near as if he was one with Him. I will reproduce the whole passage, even at the cost of partial repetition:

> "I divorced myself and went to my Lord. Beseeching Him earnestly I said: My Lord! I pray You in the words of one for whom none is left except You. When he found me earnest in my prayer and without hope in myself, the first thing He did, responding to my prayer, was that He made me forget myself completely. Then He made me forget all creation and all existence. At that stage I felt no wish at all

and had no aspiration whatsoever. I went over one part of the creation after another. Whenever I came to one thing I said: 'Stand up so that I may cross you over'. In this way I made them stand and passed over them all. Then I reached Him. He drew me close and put me in a position nearer than the position of the soul to the body. Then He said: 'Abū Yazīd! All of them are my created beings except you'. Thereupon I said: 'So I am You and You are me"[67].

Abū Yazīd has put the whole process in a typical metaphorical language: "I sloughed of myself as a serpent sloughs of its skin, then I looked at me, and lo and behold! I was He"[68].

The phase of self-negation and union in the mystical journey of Abū Yazīd was quite prolonged. It lasted for forty years at least. A disciple of his Egyptian friend, Dhu l-Nūn, visited him during this period. When he knocked at his door, Abū Yazīd came out and asked: Whom do you want? He said: "Abū Yazīd." Thereupon Abū Yazīd said: "My son! For the last forty years Abū Yazīd is himself looking for Abū Yazīd"[69]. In another version of the episode when Abū Yazīd came out the man said: 'Are you Abū Yazīd?' There-upon Abū Yazīd said: Who is Abū Yazīd? I wish I would have seen Abū Yazīd". When the man reported the episode to Dhu l-Nūn the latter said: "My brother Abū Yazīd has lost his self in the love of God, and is now looking for it as others are doing"[70]. It was during this period that when he would call a disciple that was in his service for twenty years he enquired about his name every time he called him. One day the disciple said: 'Sir, I am sorry to say that I am in your service for the last twenty years, but you enquire of my name every day'. Abū Yazīd said: 'Son! I am not kidding. His (God's) name has overwhelmed me and wiped out every other name from my heart. I remember your name, and then forget it'[71].

Nor was the abolition of the self an easy task. To achieve that Abū Yazīd had to pass through severe agony and restlessness. His nephew and attendant Abū Musā says that

Abū Yazīd would pray at nights: "How long shall this self (of mine) stand between me and You? I beseech you to wipe it off me, so that You become myself and You alone remain there, and see nothing except Yourself, O my love!"[72]. We have a number of sayings in our sources in which Abū Yazīd has affirmed of his union (*jam'*) with God. For example: "I was a guard on my heart for forty years. Thereafter, I looked into myself, it was the Lord, and the Lord was the servant"[73]. It was in this state that when a person came to see him Abū Yazīd came out and said: "There is none in the house except God"[74].

The experience of union with God often proves deeply exciting and throws some sufis into strong commotion. This was the case with Abū Yazīd. Following the lines quoted above in which he complains that his self stands between him and God and prays to Him to wipe it out completely he is reported to have said: "God accepted my prayer, but He inflamed me (*hayyajanī*)"[75]. A small provocation in this state would easily excite and stir him. A person once taunted him saying: 'You speak of renunciation and devotion. But I don't see much of it in you'. Abū Yazīd became furious (*hāja*) and said: 'Renunciation, devotion and gnosis have, in fact, proceeded from me'[76]. It is in this condition that words that are called *shaṭḥ*, ecstatic utterances would come out from his mouth. We will discuss this phenomenon in detail later.

This condition was in sharp contrast to his earlier condition when he hardly opened his mouth. Muhammad b. Yūsuf, another disciple of Abū Yazīd says of these early days: "I was with Abū Yazīd for thirteen years, but I never heard a word from him. He would keep his head on his knees, then raise it and say: 'Ah', and drop it again on his knees'[77]. To heave a sigh or cry before one achieves union or to burst into *shaṭḥ* when one achieves it is not something uncommon with the sufis. Before Abū Yazīd reached this stage, he had given up saying words of *dhikr* with his tongue, and only remembered God in the heart. He even called the earlier period of oral *dhikr* as a period of unawareness (*qhaybah*). His words are: "I was

unaware of God (*ghibtu 'an Allah*) for thirty years, and my unawareness of Him was my remembering him (*dhikr lahū*). But when I was detained from it, I found Him all the time as if He was me".[78] That *dhikr* here means oral *dhikr* is beyond all doubt. It is a common knowledge that in their spiritual journey (*sulūk*) some sufis stop saying oral *dhikr*. Let us also note this remark of Abū Yazīd: "To remember God with tongue is a kind of unawareness (*ghaflah*)[79].

The union that Abū Yazīd had at this time was a union of his self with God, an experience in which he was still conscious of himself and conscious of God, though not as one separate from the other. He was conscious of himself-in-God. From this stage he passed into a stage of complete *ghaybah* (lit. unconsciousness), when he was neither conscious of himself, nor of God, nor of himself-in-God. This is the last stage of *fanā* and *jam'*, an experience of absolute oneness beyond all distinctions. Abū Yazīd expressed this experience in a symbolic language in this way. 'The first time I went for Hajj I saw the House (of God); the second time I did Hajj I saw the Lord of the House, but not the House; the third time I did Hajj I saw neither the House, nor the Lord of the House"[80]. It may be recalled that Abū Yazīd did Hajj only once in his life[81].

This was, however, not the end of Abū Yazīd's journey to God. The final stage which he reached after passing over the stage of undifferentiated oneness, he describes in this way:

> "God veiled me (*jannanī*) through me so I died. Then He veiled me through Him so I lived. Then he veiled me from me and Him so I became unconscious (*ghibtū*). Then He restored me to sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) and enquired about my experiences (*aḥwālī*). I said: Veiling me through me is my passing away (*fanā*) and veiling me through You is (my) surviving (*baqā*), and veiling me from me and from You is light (*ḍiyā*) and You are throughout these states more remote (than near)"[82].

This means that absolute undifferentiated unity was not the ultimate truth which Abū Yazīd finally realized. His ultimate

realization was that God was beyond all the states of *fanā*, *baqā* and *ghaybah*. His final experience was an experience of God's transcendence rather than oneness. Further, it was a state of *ṣaḥw*, not of ecstasy (*sukr*) that accompanies, as Qushayrī has observed, the state of post-union difference (*al-farq al-thanī*). Here is a much more clear statement of the experience by Abū Yazīd:

> "Union (*waṣl*) is like separation (*faṣl*), then separation comes after union. Both have a name (*ism*) and a reference (*majrā*) and the experiences to which they refer have clear characteristics. When the mystic unites after separation he is given the knowledge of His (God's) unknown eternity (*ghayb azli-hī*). But when he reaches perfection separation (*faṣl*) comes back, but now it is a separation which does not annul union (*waṣl*) nor negates separation (*faṣl*)[83].

Let us first note that Abū Yazīd is not simply stating a general point; he is not accustomed to. He is referring to his own experience. The statement does affirm that he has passed through these stages, and that he has reached the stage of post union separation. Secondly, it underlines the fact that the post-union separation is quite different from the pre-union separation in that it combines the characteristics of both union and separation. Thirdly, it asserts clearly that post-union separation is a higher and more perfect experience as compared to the experience of simple union which precedes it, a definite ascent rather than descent.

That Abū Yazīd's final experience was not an experience of undifferentiated unity or complete *ghaybah*, but an experience of separation after union (*waṣl ba'd al-faṣl*), or the second separation (*farq thānī*), as Qushayrī calls it, an experience which was characterized by *ṣaḥw* rather than *sukr*, is further supported by the answer which he gave to the question put to him before his death regarding his age. When he was asked: 'How old are you?.' He said: "Four years; for it was four years ago that I saw God. The first seventy years were simply wasted in idle talk, and I do not count them in my

age"[84]. The reference here to 'idle talk' is to the *shaṭḥāt* which Abū Yazīd often indulged into during the period of union.

We have numerous statements in our sources that Abū Yazīd made at various stages of his mystical journey. We have sorted them out, and shall note a few of them here, first the ones which belonged to the period of union and then the ones which belonged to the period of post-union separation.

During the first period when Abū Yazīd ws asked about the great name of God he said: "Say: 'There is no god except Allah', and you don't be there". To the same question another time his answer was: "Say: 'There is no god except Allah', and you be there"[85]. The former answer reflects the experience of *fanā*, and the latter the experience of *jam'*. He was asked: What is *tasawwuf*? He said: "An attribute of God that the servant puts on (himself)"[86]. Abū Yazīd expressed the same point in this way: 'The least attribute of a gnostic (*al-'ārif*) is that the attributes of God and a kind of (His) Lordship (*al-rubūbīyah*) flow into him"[87].

One of such attributes is the transcending of time and space. One day his attendant Abū Musa asked him: How do you pass your days? Abū Yazīd said: "I have neither days nor nights"[88]. Another time he said: "I am like a sea of unconsciousness (*baḥr muṣtalim*) which has no beginning and no end"[89]. Abū Yazīd is referring here to his experience of absolute undifferentiated oneness which has no boundaries. That this state is devoid of all characteristics, he puts in this way: "My attributes have vanished in His unknowable Mystery (*ghayb*), and the Mystery has no attributes that can be known"[90]. Qushayrī quotes him saying: "Creatures have their states, but the gnostic does not have them. For, his attributes are annihilated, and his identity is effaced by the identity of the One other than him, and his characteristics are drowned in the characteristics of (this) Other"[91].

It is in this state that Abū Yazīd would make big claims, such as 'I am the great lord of myself'[92], that 'my onslaught is more fierce than His onslaught'[93], that 'I am the Preserved

Tablet'[94], and that 'I am sufficient to myself, (fully) sufficient'[95]. It is in this state also that he would utter words that conflict with the Shari'ah. For example, he said: "Lord! You gave me this day my bread, but You did not send to me any trouble that I may eat with it"[96]. To ask for trouble is not what the Sharī'ah teaches.

Ecstatic utterances (*shaṭḥāt*) like these disappear when gnostics reach the final stage of separation after union. This state is characterized by calm, serenity and humility. "When people really know God", Abu Yazid said, "they keep silent, and when they keep silent they are serene in their gnosis"[97]. About the Pharaoh of Moses he made this remark: 'Had Pharaoh practiced hunger, he would not have said: "I am Your Lord, the Great", and added: "The arrogant cannot even have the smell of gnosis"[98].

Comparing the state of union with the state of post-union separation Abū Yazīd said: "At the door (of the house) there is noise, crying and commotion due to intense longing for the Lord of the house as well as fear from Him. But in the house there is calm, reverence, awe and respect, because then one knows the Lord of the house intimately"[99].

At another time he explained their difference to a disciple in this way: "You see how rivers flow with a splashing, chattering sound. But when they draw near to the sea and mingle with it their splash and chatter is stilled. The sea does not feel their minglinging nor do they add to it anything. Nor would they have affected it at all were they to go out from it. Men like you are like the torrent. The torrent, so long as it is alone, bustles along in its course and makes loud its chatter, but when it draws near to the sea and mingles with it, its bubbling and chatter are stilled, and the sea does not feel it, nor does it add to the sea nor subtract from it if it turns back from the sea"[100].

Contrary to high claims in the unitive stage, the mystic in the post-union stage affirms his nothingness, and extols the greatness and majesty of God. "When they drink from the cup

of love", Abū Yazīd said, "they enter the sea of intimacy and enjoy the pleasure of communion with Him, and when they know Him truly as they should, they engage in glorifying Him"[101]. The Gnostic is overwhelmed by awe. "One who knows God is awed and stunned; he is not spared to speak"[102]. He finds that God transcends the world completely. What is the meaning of 'God is great'? Answering this question, Abū Yazīd said: "It means that God is too great to be conceived in human categories, or grasped by reason or caught in experience"[103]. Somebody asked him: "When does a person reach God"? He said: "Poor man! Does anyone reach Him ever? Had a particle of Him emanated from Him, the universe and all that is there in it would have been annihilated"[104].

When the mystic thinks of his earlier utterances that he had made in the state of union, he considers them to be an 'idle talk', and turns to God in repentance. "After reaching the end", Abū Yazīd said "mystics turn to one thing only: "Seek forgiveness!"[105]. At this stage they hardly say or do anything that conflicts with the Sharī'ah and regard complete observance of its rules as the highest perfection of man. "If you see a person", Abū Yazīd said, "spreading his prayer mat on the waters, or sitting crosslegged in the air, do not be deceived till you know how he complies with the commands and prohibitions (of the *Shar'*)"[106]. When he was asked: "Does anyone go beyond the Prophet?" He retorted: "Does anyone ever reach him"[107]. At another time he said: "What the prophets are given is like a big jar of honey, and a single drop that trickles from it is equal to what all the saints are given, and no jar has been equal to the jar of our Prophet"[108].

"A true Gnostic", Abū Yazīd said, "is one who does not stop remembering God, nor wearies of doing His duties, nor feels attachment with anything other than Him"[109]. Abū Yazīd lived up to this ideal till the end of his life. He had a foreboding of the end as it drew near. But nobody knew it except him. His attendant Abū Mūsā says that every morning he knocked at his door, he would then come out and pray in the mosque with

them. But one morning he knocked and knocked, and then raised his voice and called him by name. But Abū Yazīd did not come out. He broke the door open and found that Abū Yazīd had passed away to his Lord[110]. May God bless his soul.

Ecstatic Utterances (*Shaṭḥāt*)

Of all our earlier authorities Sarrāj alone discusess the phenomenon of *shaṭḥ*, ecstatic utterances, at length. He defines *shaṭḥ* as 'a strange language seeking to describe a *wajd*, an affective experience which sets in with force, throws the mystic into excitement and overpowers him'[111] At another place he defines *shaṭḥ* as 'a language in wich one expresses a *wajd* that flows from its source and carries a claim. The claimant is not in possession of his reason, but he is guarded'[112].

It is clear from these definitions that the experience which gives rise to *shaṭḥ* is (1) an extremely powerful experience which takes over the mystic completely and dominates his consciousness, (2) suppresses his reason such that he loses control over his language, and (3) causes so much excitement that a small provocation leads him to make wild claims and 'attribute to himself what does not belong to him'[113]. (4) The language of *shaṭḥ*, Sarrāj further observes, is apparently shocking (*mustashna'*) but internally correct... The common man finds it difficult to understand, but those who are acquainted with the experience know what it means[114]. This is due partly to the nature of the experience as it cannot be contained in our ordinary language and 'overflows it just as the waters of a flood passing through a narrow canal overflow from its banks'[115]. It is due also to the intoxication of the mystic that loosens his grip on the words. He is not able to describe his experience in proper words and avoid the ones that are misleading[116]. On the nature of experience itself that gives rise to *shaṭḥ* Sarrāj does not say much. But from the sayings of various Sufis that he has discussed in the section on *shaṭḥāt* in

his book it is quite clear that it is the experience of *fanā* and *jam'*, union.

Sarrāj's final point about *shaṭḥ* is that it only proceeds from mystics in the beginning of their mystical journey, not when they reach perfection. His words are: "*Shaṭḥ* rarely proceeds from perfect men, as they have complete control over their ideas. It only proceeds from those who are still in the beginning, but are expected to reach the end and attain perfection'[117]. In other words, *shaṭḥ* is a sign of immaturity of the mystic, when he attains maturity and perfection he does not indulge in *shaṭḥ*. Sarrāj is very clear on this point. Qushayrī alludes to it when he associates *shaṭḥ* with the experience of expansion (*basṭ*) and says that men of perfection (*ahl al-taḥqīq*) consider the states of contraction and expansion as something from which one should seek the protection of God[118].

The characteristics which Sarrāj associates with the phenomenon of *shaṭḥ* are also attested by reporters of Abū Yazīd's *shaṭḥāt*. Abū Mūsā says that when Abū Yazīd was excited (*hāja*) words would come out of his mouth and we remembered them[119]. Someone made an adverse remark about his miracles. Abū Yazīd was inflamed and said: 'A really good believer is one to whom *ka'bah* itself comes and circumbulates him and returns while he does not feel it as if he is mad'[120]. This is a disguised reference to his own experience. Abū Yazīd himself testified to his excitement when, describing his experience of *fanā*, he said as noted before: 'God accepted my prayer to abolish my self-hood but he threw me into intense excitement (*hayyajanī*)[121]. That Abū Yazīd's *shaṭḥāt* belong to the period of union in his mystical career is hinted by Sahlajī. After relating the observation of a disciple that he was in the service of Abū Yazīd for thirteen years but did not hear a word from him, he says that it was the case during Abū Yazīd's period of contraction (*qabḍ*). Had the man visited him, he adds, during his period of expansion (*basṭ*) he would have heard as others had heard[122]. That during the last four years of post-

union separation Abū Yazīd had given up *shaṭḥ*, and become calm, sober and meek, is clear from the remark of Jāmī that Abū Yazīd in his last days used to say: 'Lord! I did not remember You except after negligence (*ghaflah*) and did not serve You except from time to time'[123].

Sarrāj says that Junayd wrote a book[124] in which he explained some of the *shaṭḥāt* of Abū Yazīd and commented on his experiences. The book is not extant but we can have a fair idea of how Junayd looked at Abū Yazīd's *shaṭḥāt* from what Sarrāj has reproduced from it. Sahlajī does not mention the book, but he notes one of Junayd's comments in which he defends Abū Yazīd[125]. It may also be noted that Sarrāj does more than simply quoting from Junayd's comments, he also elaborates on them, and offers his own comments.

The first thing that one gets from Junayd's comments is that one should realize that Abū Yazīd's words are to be understood in the background of the different stages of his spiritual journey he passed through. They have to be related to and explained in terms of these stages. His words are: 'The reports about Abū Yazīd are diverse and their reporters also are too many. This is due to the different times he had and different states in which he was placed. Everyone, therefore, reported what words he heard from him, and related what he knew about his states'[126]. Abū Yazīd himself alludes to this methodological principle in the answer to a query of Abū Ḥafṣ (d. ca. 261/877), his sufi friend from Nishapur: 'How come we hear about you all the time things that are quite strange?' Abū Yazīd replied: "Words come out from me according to my times, and everyone takes them in the light of his idea and then attributes them to me"[127]. Thus Abū Yazīd pleads that his words should be understood in the context of his states and experiences, and complains that people interpret them in terms of their own ideas and miss what he wants to say. In the foregoing pages I have kept this principle before me. I have, first, traced out the stages through which Abū Yazīd passd in

his *sulūk*, then sorted out his words and put each in the background of the stage in which it was uttered.

There are two more things to be noted in Junayd's comments. One, his idea that the *shaṭḥāt* of Abū Yazīd, belong to the first stage of his spiritual journey. They indicate that their sayer is in the beginning (*bidāyah*) of his journey and that he has not reached the end. His words are: "Although Abū Yazīd, may God bless his soul, had great experiences and rose to great heights he did not cross the initial stages. I have not heard of his words that speak of perfection and the final stage"[128].

The second is that they are not to be taken as statements asserting or denying what they appear to assert or deny. They do contain an element of truth; however they are essentially an expression of Abū Yazīd's feeling. When, for example, Abū Yazīd says 'I am looking for Abū Yazīd', Junayd would say he is not denying his existence in the house, he is rather saying that he is not conscious of himself. Or when he says that 'there is none in the house except God', he is not denying his humanity nor claiming divinity; he is only saying that he is at that time conscious of none except God. Similarly when he says 'I am without attributes', he is not saying that he has no attributes but simply telling that he is at that time not conscious of his attributes. Or when he says that his attributes have vanished in God's *ghayb*, he is not saying that he has been assimilated into the Divine Essence; he is rather saying that he is in a state in which he is conscious of the attribute-less Essence of God to the complete unconsciousness of his own attributes. Similarly when he says: 'As I looked at myself it was the Lord and the Lord was the servant', Abū Yazīd does not assert the transformation of his self into the Lord of the universe or his participation in Lordship, nor does he assert the transformation of the Lord into a servant or His participation in servant-hood. He simply says that he felt himself completely identified with God so that he was no more conscious of the difference between the Lord and the servant.

Sahlajī mentions that some people complained to Junayd that Abū Yazīd spoke in extravagant language and quoted his words: 'Glory be to me! Glory be to me!' 'I am my Lord the great'. Junayd said: 'The man had annihilated himself in the vision of (God's) majesty, and spoke of what had annihilated him. He had forgotten God ('s position) because of his vision of Him. He did not see except God, be He glorified, so he described Him and spoke of Him. He was so occupied with God that he was not conscious of anyone else nor did he speak of anyone else. Have you not heard about the mad man of Banī 'Āmir? When he was asked about his own name he said: 'Layla',. Though he spoke of himself, he did not perceive himself in that (word)"[127].

In other words, if Abū Yazīd says, 'Glory be to me!", he is not saying anything about himself (though he is apparently doing that) as the mad man of Bani 'Āmir was not saying anything about himself although he was apparently doing that. Abū Yazīd is rather speaking of God and His glory, as the mad man was speaking of his love. As the latter did not intend to tell anything about himself or in the words of Junayd did not perceive himself in the words he said, though he was replying to a question about his name, similarly the former did not intend to tell anything about himself although he used the first person pronoun. The reason which led the mad man of Bani 'Amir to respond in the way he did and Abū Yazīd to use the first person pronoun is the same: complete identity of the speaker with the object of his love forgetting all differences between them. And as the words of the man-lover did not mean that he was transformed into a woman losing his own identity, similarly the words of the God-lover did not mean that he was transformed into God losing his humanity.

One might say that what has led Junayd to the interpretation of these utterances of identity in a psychological sence stripping them of an objective meaning is his own belief in the ultimate difference between man and God epitomized in his saying *'Tawḥīd'* (affirming the unity of God in experience)

is the isolation of the Eternal from the contingent'[130]. Abū Yazīd might not have held that belief, and his words may well be taken to mean what they apparently imply. This is the line which has been taken by a number of modern scholars in interpreting Abū Yazīd's words. Their main stake besides language seems to be the fact that some of the later sufis like Ḥallaj and Ibn 'Arabī in Islam and very many mystics in other faiths and traditions have taken their experiences as objective intuitions of reality, and the metaphysical perspectives that they have developed are to a large extent based on the objectivity of these intuitions. That mystical experiences are not mere subjective experiences of feeling, and that they have a cognitive content also is universally believed to be a fact of all mysticism. Hence they presume that the same would apply to Abū Yazīd's mystical experiences and words.

This presumption is, however, not true. First of all it is not a fact that the Sufis of Islam take every mystical experience as an experience of objective reality. Some of them consider the experience of identity simply a phase in the sufi *sulūk* and do not attribute to it any cognitive value. Others concede to it only a partial truth as we have said in the introduction. Secondly, there is nothing concrete to prove that Abū Yazīd considered his own experiences of the various stages of *fanā* as objective. The language by itself is not a sufficient proof. We do not have any statement by Abū Yazīd saying that he takes his experiences objectively, nor does he try to develop a metaphysical perspective on the basis of his experiences which may indicate that he believed in their objectivity. His words are mere descriptions of his feelings and visions and contain no comments on their nature.

Thirdly, experience of identity or of *ghaybah* is not the final experience of Abū Yazīd as we have shown. The final stage of his *sulūk* is the stage of post-union separation (*faṣl ba'd al-waṣl*) at which he declares in unequivocal terms the transcendence of God rather than His oneness with the creation to be the final truth. This fact has unfortunately escaped the

notice of our scholars. The transcendence of God is not an idea which Junayd alone held, and which led him to regard Abū Yazīd's words as reflecting the stage of identity and *ghaybah* belonging to intitial or intermediary stages. Abū Yazīd also held the same idea. This is clear from the saying we have already quoted regarding the nature of true *ma'rifah* of God and the true *'arif*. "When they know Him", he says, "as He should be known, they are awed by His majesty[131]. "You are throughout these states (of *fana'*, *baqa'*, and *ghaybah*) more remote than near"[132]. Some one asked him: "When does a man reach God?" He said: "Poor man! Has any one reached Him? Were a particle of Him to appear to the creation nothing would survive of the world and all that is there in it"[133].

Of modern scholars who have interpreted Abū Yazīd's words objectively, R. C. Zaehner has built the most impressive case. He, however, holds as uncritically as others the belief that Abū Yazīd's experiences are objective appropriations of reality. His belief is strengthened by the similarities that he finds between the words of Abū Yazīd and the words of the Upanishads, which were made familiar to him, he thinks, by his teacher Abū 'Alī al-Sindī. He discovers similarities not only in language but also in concepts, which confirm, to his satisfaction, the thesis that Abū 'Alī was an Indian scholar and reinforce the view that Abū Yazīd's experience was objective appropriation of reality, as was the case, as it is said, with the seers of the Upanishads and its great interpreter, Shanker.

Zaehner overlooks a number of things when he compares the words of Abū Yazīd with those of the Upanishads. He overlooks, first, the fact that whereas the seers of the Upanishads expound a philosophical position, Abū Yazīd only describes his experiences. The seers take their experiences as intuitions of reality whereas that cannot be asserted of Abū Yazīd. Zaehner does not seem to be aware that the relation between a mystic vision or experience and reality is problematic in Muslim mysticism. Hence one cannot presume without proof the same thing in the case of Abū Yazīd as one does in the case

of say Ibn 'Arabi. With these general observations we will take up the specific points that Zaehner has made out.

He tries, first, to show that the Upanishadic words 'Thou are That' which identify the real self of man (thou) with the essence of the world (That) is what is exactly reproduced by Abū Yazīd in the following words that he quotes[134] from Sarraj:

> Abū Yazīd is reported to have said: 'Once God raised me up and placed me before Him, and said to me: O Abū Yazīd! Verily My creatures long to see thee. And I said: adorn me with Thy oneness, so that when Thy creatures see me, they may say: "We have seen Thee (i.e. God), and Thou are that" and I (Abū Yazīd) will not be there'[135].

This is not quite true. For although the words 'Thou are that' occur in the passage, 'Thou' stands for God and not the real self of man as we have in the Upanishadic saying. Similarly 'that' in the passage refers to Abū Yazīd while in the Upanishads it refers to the reality underlying the world. Leaving this linguistic point aside, the real question that we would like to raise is whether the sentence 'Thou are that' in Abū Yazīd's passage really conveys the same idea that it does in the Upanishads. Upanishads distinguish between the empirical self of man and his real self; they also distinguish between *ātma* or Brahma which is the essence of the world and between God. Hence the sentence means, at least as interpreted by Shanker, that the real self of man as distinguished from his empirical self is identical with Brahma as distinguished from God. Such distinctions are not visible in Abū Yazīd, and a reader who is not aware of the Upanishadic meaning beforehand is not likely to interpret the sentence in that sense. And there is not enough reason to believe that Abū Yazīd did actually mean it.

The above passage that Zaehner quotes from Sarrāj is not complete. The full passage is re-produced by Sahlajī. If we read it in Sahlajī's version the real intent of the passage shall appear to be completely different. The passage is:

> Abū Yazīd said: 'I was once raised up and placed before God'. Then He said to me: 'O Abū Yazīd! My creation wants to see you'. Abū Yazīd said: 'O dear! I do not like to see them. But if You want it from me I cannot go against You. Adorn me then with Your Unity so that when Your creatures see me they may say: "We have seen You, and You are that (*dhak*)", and I will not be there'. Abū Yazīd adds, 'God did that, He placed me and adorned me and raised me'. Then He said: 'Go out to My creatures'. So I took one step from Him towards the creatures. But when I took the second step I fainted and became unconscious. God then said: 'Return to Me My love, for He cannot live away from me'[136].

This passage is far from conveying the Upanishadic sense of identity. It rather reflects a conflict in the mind of Abū Yazīd. He had identified himself in love with God, occupied himself completely with Him and removed himself away from the people. He did not like to mix with the people and to perform the duties which the *Sharī'ah* puts on him in relation to them, particularly the duty of showing the people the path to God. But, on the other hand, he also feels the responsibility with which the *Sharī'ah* charges him. God's words: 'My creatures want to see you' is a reference to the *Sharī'ah* command, and Abū Yazīd's saying: 'I do not like to see them, but if You like it from me I cannot go against You' is a reference to the conflict between his inclination and his sense of duty. He is thus torn between two conflicting urges. Impelled by the sense of duty he moves towards the people but then he is overcome by his opposite predisposition and faints. This indicates that he is not able to resolve the conflict. The language of dialogue between Abū Yazīd and God should be no obstacle in accepting this interpretation of the vision. For the mystics often refer to their own thoughts as the words of God. Commenting on the language of the passage Sarrāj writes: 'Know that when the servant feels that his Lord is with him and resides in his heart and witnesses his thoughts, every idea which arises in his heart is, as if, God addresses him with

it, and every thing that he thinks of in the depth of his heart is, as if, God speaks to him through it, because the ideas and the thoughts in the heart and whatever passes in his mind originate from God and return to him. And this (i.e. the dialogue between God and Abū Yazīd) should be taken in this sense'[137].

The second passage that Zaehner quotes[138] is this:

> 'As soon as I came close to (God's) Unity I became a bird whose body was of oneness and whose wings were of everlastingness, and I went on flying in the space of relativity for ten years until I entered into an atmosphere a hundred million times as large; and I went on flying until I reached the expanse of Eternity and in it I saw the tree of Oneness'. 'Then (says Sarraj), he described the soil (in which it grew) its root and branch, its shoots and fruits, and then he said: 'Then I looked, and I knew that all this was deception'[139].

Junayd's comment on this vision is that 'it indicates Abū Yazīd's first experience of *tawḥīd*... This is not the desired end, and the ultimate goal. It is only part of the way[140]. When Junayd says that it was the first experience of Abū Yazīd he says that not only in the light of his own experience but also with reference to Abū Yazīd's own words. The passage which Zaehner has quoted actually begins with the words: 'The first time I reached (God's) unity...'. Zaehner drops the words 'the first time' perhaps because that goes against his effort to show that the vision indicates Abū Yazīd's final realization.

Explaining the vision, Sarraj says that 'Abū Yazīd's reference to the wings of oneness and the body of everlastingness in his flight means that he no longer depends on his own power but rather relies on God's, and entrusts all his acts and moves to the one Eternal being in a strange language.... And the words 'ten years, hundred million times, the expanse of eternity and the atmosphere of modality' (*kayfiyah*, which Zaehner translates as relativity), all this, as Junayd has said, is the description of a part of the way... The words 'all this is deceit' mean that attention to and occupation

with the creation or kingdom is only a deceit in comparison to the intellectual affirmation of unity (*tajrīd*) and its experiential realization (*tafrīd*)... For engagement in things other than God has been regarded by perfect men as deception[141]. This interpretation of the words 'all this is deceit' (*khud'ah*) is borne out by the words of Abū Yazīd himself which we have quoted in the beginning and which we shall quote again: 'I was tested', Abū Yazīd says, 'with many offers, offers of this world, but I turned away from them. Then they offered me the things of the other world and my soul turned to them. But He (God) warned me that they are deceptions (*khud'ah*), so I turned away from them. Now that He had seen that I was not intrigued by them He opened to me the door of divine favours (*'aṭāyā - Ilāhīyah*)[142].

Zaehner thinks that the words 'all this is a deceit' is a reference to Shanker's doctrine of *maya*, and Abū Yazīd is in fact saying that the whole empirical world is an illusion. But there is not much to support this contention. Similarities between the language of Abū Yazīd and that of Upanishads are at best an indication that Abū Yazīd had heard of the Upanishads and known some of their themes. But that he also adopted their ideas is difficult to believe.

One of the indications that Abū Yazīd had accepted the doctrines of the Upanishads as expounded by Shanker, Zaehner claims, is the radical change that Abū Yazīd's attitude to devotion, renunciation, *dhikr*, practices of religion (the *Sharī'ah*), and the Prophet went through. He says that as a consequence of his realization of his essential oneness with the ultimate reality and other truths of the non-dualist Vedanta of Shanker, Abū Yazīd considered himself above religious law and above ritual acts. He considered that the acts of worship were merely ordained for those who were incapable of mystical experiences. He thought he was not bound by worship or asceticism. He found that meditation was a hindrance, for only when he had given it up did he realize his identity with God[143]. Zaehner mentions many other things which is not necessary to

/e have picked out these few things and shall here. We hope that it will be sufficient to show qu completely misunderstood Abū Yazīd's words.

Yazīd never gave up his prayers. We have noted his Abū Musā's words that he used to knock every g at the door of Abū Yazīd's cubicle and Abū Yazīd would come out and lead the morning prayers in the mosque. The only morning he failed to do that was when he was found dead. Abū Yazīd fasted till the end of his life except on the days that have been prohibited by the Prophet. He lived like an ascetic throughout his life. We have quoted the incident that he refused to accept the gift of a pillow which his friend Dhu'l-Nūn had sent him saying that one who was his own pillow did not need his. About this incident we have mentioned the observation of Sahlajī that it happened towards the end of Abū Yazīd's life when he had become very weak and had been reduced to mere bones and skin. Abū Yazīd had vowed poverty and hunger and he lived up to it. It is true that he disparaged devotion and renunciation and exalted *ma'rifah*, but that does not mean that he ever thought that an *'ārif* could do without devotions and renunciation. We have earlier explained that his disparagement is concerned not with devotion or renunciation as such but with the motive behind them seeking for things other than God. It may also concern with the thought of the devotee or the ascetic that all that he is doing is due to him and proceeds from him, whereas an *'ārif* considers his devotions and renunciations as a gift of God proceeding from His initiative and His power. Abū Yazīd removes all possible misunderstanding by saying: 'One who attains to the state of union (*jam'*) must follow the rules of servant-hood (*'ubūdīyah*) and keep his inner self (*sirrahū*) busy in contemplating God'[144]. His words, 'I wonder how an *'ārif*, that is the man who knows God worships Him'[145], do not mean that an *'arif* does not worship Him. It rather means that it is a wonder that a man who knows God and as such is absorbed in Him is still able to detach himself from the consuming experience and worships God.

Abū Yazīd never gave up *dhikr*. The sign of an 'a
he does not stop remembering God, does not weary o
his duties to Him and does not feel comfort in any com
other than God's[146]. His words: 'I was unaware of God (*ghib*
'an-Allah) for thirty yerars, and my unawareness of Him was
my remembering Him. But when I was detained from it I found
Him every time as if He was I (*ka-annahū anā*)'[147] may be
interpreted in two ways. It may mean that Abū Yazīd
remembered God for thirty years under the impression that it
was he who was remembering Him out of his own initiative
and his power and then realized that both initiative and power
belonged to God. As a consequence of this realization he felt
himself very close to God as if God was him. We have this
interpretation if we stress the pronoun 'my' in 'my
remembering Him'. The other interpretation may be that at a
particular stage of his *sulūk* Abū Yazīd stopped uttering the
words of *dhikr* and concentrated on meditation on God which
led him to an intense feeling of love with God such that he felt
himself completely identified with Him. That Sufis sometimes
drop oral *dhikr* and concentrate on pure meditation for a period
is a known fact. This does not mean that they give up oral *dhikr*
for ever. Abū Yazīd's words to which Zaehner has referred, 'I
used to say Allah for thirty years, then I stopped saying (the
actual word is *sakantū* which means I became silent) and lo!
my veil was my remembering Him'[148], most probably means
the latter.

Notes and References

1. Hujwirī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, opt.cit., p.132
2. Sarrāj, *K.al-Luma'* opt. cit. p.459-471
3. Ibn Taymiah, *Majmu'at al-Rasai'l wa l-Masā'il*, ed. Rashid al-Raḍa,Cairo, vol. IV. p.59-72
4. Such as al-Sulamī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah*, ed. Nuruddin Sharibah, Cario, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1953, p.67-74; al-Sarrāj, *K.al-Luma'*, opt. cit. 459-77; al-Qushyari, *al-Risālah*, opt. cit. p.88-91; Hujwirī, *Kashf al-Mahjub*, opt,cit. p.132-4; 'Attar, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, vol.I p.129-66; Jāmi, *Nafahāt al-Uns* Lucknow, Nawalkishore, 1329/1911. 59-60; Abu Nu'yam, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā*, opt. cit. vol.X pp.33-41; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab* (Beirut, al-Maktaba al-Tijarī, n.d.), pp
5. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī (ed.) *Shaṭḥāt al-Ṣufīyah* (Wakalat al-Maṭbū'ah, Kuwait, 2nd print 1976, henceforth referred simply by the name of the original author Sahlajī) pp.60-61
6. Ibid, p. 62-63
7. Shahlajī, p.65; Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.80
8. Sahlajī, p.70
9. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah* p.80
10. Sahlajī, p. 140,157
11. Sahlajī, p.62; 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirah*, vol.I, p.130
12. Sahlajī, p.83
13. Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah*, p.63; Qushayrī gives both the dates, *al-Risālah*, p.88; Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-Uns*, p.59
14. Sahlajī, p.133
15. Ibid, p.95, 151
16. Commenting on the experience and words of Abū Yazīd that reached him, Junayd said: He did cross the first stage *(al-bidāyah)* but I have not heard anything of him that may show that he reached the end and attained perfection (*Sarrāj, al-Luma'*,

p.479). And Shiblī remarked: Had Abū Yazīd been with us, he would have entered into Islam *(aslama)* at the hand of anyone of our pupils. That is, Sarraj explains, he would have benefited from the disciples of Shiblī (*al-Luma'*, p.480).

17. Sarrāj, *al-Luma'*, p.235
18. Nicholson, R.A., *The Mystics of Islam*, London, reprint, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966, p.17 (first ed. George Bell and Sons, 1914).
19. Arberry, A.J. *Reason and Revelation in Islam*, London, 1957, p.90
20. Zaehner, R.C., *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, New York, Shocken Paperbacks, 1969, p.94 ff.
21. 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirah*, vol.I, p.130
22. Sahlajī, p.142
23. Ibid, p.105,137
24. Ibid, p.163
25. Ibid, p.91
26. Ibid, p.87; Sarrāj, *al-Luma'*, p.249
27. Ibid, p.87; Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.366
28. Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilyah* opt.cit, vol.X:36
29. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.81; Sarrāj, *al-Luma'*, 145.
30. Sahlajī, p.116
31. Ibid, p.66
32. Ibid, p.67
33. Ibid, p.161, Sarrāj, *al-Luma'*, p.473
34. Jāmī, *Nafahāt*, p.60
35. Sahlajī, p.127; Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.145; 'Attār, *Tadhkirah*, vol.I p.148. This seems to be an exaggeration.
36. Sahlajī, 180
37. Ibid, p.159
38. Sarrāj, *al-Luma'*, p.223
39. Ibid, p.477
40. Shalajī, p.150
41. Ibid, p.160

42. Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt*, p.74; 'Attār, *Tadhkirah*, vol.I, p.144, 156
43. Shalajī, p.174
44. Ibid, p.89
45. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, 80, 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirah*, vol.I, p.159
46. Shalajī, p.109
47. Ibid, p.86
48. Ibid, p.84
49. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.82
50. Shalajī, p.121
51. Ibid, p.129
52. Ibid, p.102
53. Sarrāj, *al-Luma'*, p.400
54. Shalajī, p.146
55. Ibid, p.153, Qushayrī has quoted an instance of wordly temptation: Abū Yazīd once saw some houries in dream and looked at them. As a result, the time he was having was taken away from him. The next time he saw them in dream he did not turn to them and said: 'You people distract' (*al-Risālah*, p.576)
56. Shalajī, p.151; Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.82
57. Shalajī, p.167
58. Ibid, p.130
59. Ibid, p.164; 'Attār, *Tadhkirah*, vol.I, p.156
60. Shalajī, p.167
61. Ibid, p.97
62. 'Attār, *Tadhkirah*, vol.I, pp.132-133
63. Shalajī, p.123; Qushyrī, *al-Risālah*, p.719, 273
64. Shalajī, p.163
65. Ibid, p.87
66. Ibid, p.87, 123
67. Ibid, p.153
68. Ibid, p.151
69. Ibid, p.85
70. Ibid, p.95, 151

71. 'Attār, *Tadhkirah*, vol.I, p.148
72. Shalajī, p.160
73. Ibid, p.167
74. Ibid, p.84, 87, 167
75. Ibid, p.160
76. Ibid, p.168
77. Ibid, p.178
78. Ibid, p.157, 159
79. Ibid, p.182
80. Ibid, p.102
81. Sarraj, *al-Luma'*, p.223
82. Ibid, p.184
83. Ibid, p.101
84. 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirah*, vol.I, p.158
85. Sahlajī, pp.109-110, 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirah*, vol.I, p.152
86. Shalajī, p.110
87. Ibid, p.102; 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirah*, vol.I, p.151
88. Ibid, p.143
89. Shalajī, p.128
90. Ibid, p.143
91. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, 603
92. Shalajī, p.143
93. Ibid, p.143
94. Ibid, p.145
95. Ibid, p.101
96. Ibid, p.64
97. Ibid, p.131
98. 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirah*, vol.I, p.158
99. Ibid, p.130
100. Ibid, p.159
101. Shalajī, p.131
102. Ibid, p.165
103. Ibid, p.148
104. Ibid, p.108
105. Ibid, p.157
106. Sarrāj, *al-Luma'*, p.400
107. Ibid, p.514

108. Sarrāj, *al-Luma'*, p.514
109. Shalajī, p.133
110. Ibid, p.66
111. Sarrāj, *al-Luma'*, p.453
112. Ibid, p.422
113. Ibid, p.428
114. Ibid, pp.453-54
115. Ibid, p.453
116. Ibid, p.453
117. Ibid, p.458
118. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.198
119. Shalajī, p.140
120. Ibid, p.159
121. Ibid, p.160
122. Ibid, p.178
123. Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-Uns*, p.60
124. Sarrāj, *al-Luma'*, p.461
125. Shalajī, p.89
126. Sarrāj, *al-Luma'*, p.459
127. Shalajī, p.161
128. Sarrāj, *al-Luma'*, p.479, 460
129. Shalajī, p.89
130. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, pp.28-29
131. Shalajī, p.131
132. Ibid, p.184
133. Ibid, p.108
134. Zaehner, R.C., *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, p.95
135. The passage quoted is on p.461 of Sarrāj's *Kitab al-Luma'*
136. Shalajī, p.149
137. Sarrāj, *Kitab al-Luma'*, 462
138. Zaehner, R.C., *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, p.75
139. This passage occurs in Sarrāj's K. *al-Luma*, p.464
140. Sarrāj, *al-Luma'*, p.464-65
141. Ibid, p.466
142. Shalajī, p.153

143. Zaehner, R.C., *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, pp.107-108
144. Shalajī, p.183
145. Ibid, p.165
146. Ibid, pp.133, 172
147. Ibid, pp.157, 159
148. Ibid, p.104

Junayd: Principles of Sufism

The most outstanding figure among the early Sufis is undoubtedly Junayd. More than any other he has contributed to the growth of the main stream of Sufism. This has been recognized by every one. Qushayrī calls him 'the Chief of the community and its leader.'[1] Hujwirī says: 'Sufis of all orders regard him their common leader'[2]. 'Aṭṭār testifies: 'All Sufis agree on his leadership, and take his word as law in the *ṭarīqah*'[3]. Jāmī notes: 'Everyone traces his spiritual descent (*nisbah*) from him'[4]. The famous eighteenth century Indian scholar and sufi, Walī Allāh (1176/1762) in an extremely illuminating review of the development of Sufism highlights Junayd's contribution in these words:

> On the fundamental principles of the sufi *ṭarīqah* all or at least most founders of sufī *ṭarīqahs* and expounders of sufi doctrines are agreed, even though they differ with regard to the methods of their practical realization. These fundamental principles are associated with the name of Junayd, the leader of the sufi community (*Sayyid al-Ṭā'ifah*), for most of these principles have been formulated by him. The Sufis of his age turned to him, and in fact all sufi orders originate from him, except of course such leaders as claim to have no teacher[5].

We shall discuss here the basic principles of the sufi *ṭarīqah* which Junayd laid down and followed in his own *sulūk*, and the way he looked on the mystic experience. We shall next consider some of the speculative ideas that he put forward. His is, probably, the first serious attempt to go beyond the description of mystical experience and expound concepts that would explain and justify that experience[6].

Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Junayd b.Muḥammad b. al-Junayd al-Khazzāz[7] was born at Baghdad in the first decade of the third century Hijrah. His family belonged originally to Nahawand in the Iranian province of Jabal that was conquered at the time of Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Umar (d.23/644). His father was a glass merchant *(al-qawārīrī)*; his uncle, Sarī al-Saqaṭī, an outstanding sufi of the time, was a trader in spices and seasoning, and Junayd himself was a dealer in raw silk *(khazzāz)*. His father died while he was quite young. His uncle then brought him up and looked after his education. Junayd learned the Qur'ān and studied Ḥadīth and Fiqh from Abū Thawr (d.250/834), a prominent scholar of fiqh who dominated the stage in Iraq before Imām Shafi'ī appeared there. Junayd acquired such a proficiency in fiqh that he answered queries in the presence of his teacher[8] while he was still twenty[9]. Ibn Sarrāj (d. 306/919), a renowned jurist of the time, was a great admirer of Junayd's expertise and acknowledged that he learned much from his sittings with Junayd[10].

Baghdadī records the tribute that the Mu'tazilī theologian Abu 'l-Qāsim al-Ka'bī paid to Junayd: "I saw in Baghdad a shaykh like whom my eyes have seen none before. Writers come to him for words, philosophers for ideas, poets for imageries, theologians for discourses, and the level of his talk is always higher than theirs; it is more profound, more elegant, and more learned"[11]. This means that Junayd was a thoroughly cultured man, conversant with various disciplines of his times, far above the scholars of the age, a poet[12] and a writer. He once said of himself: "God has not created on the earth any form of knowledge and shown the way to it to mankind in which He has not given me a share"[13]. His couplets that have been published by Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj[14], letters that have been recorded by him[15], and words that have been preserved by various authorities are ample testimony to his literary talents. In general, his style is very lucid and clear. However, some of his letters published recently by 'Abd al-Qādir[16] are in a very difficult and obscure language, deliberately so, I think, in order

to keep the ideas in the discourses out of the reach of common man, an issue to which we will return at the end of this chapter.

Junayd must have been aware of theological discussions that were going on among the theologians at Baghdad. His association with Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī[17] (d. 243/857) who wrote in refutation of the Mu'tazilite doctrines strengthens this view. Junayd must also have been aware of some philosophical ideas, since translations of Greek works into Arabic had started more than a century before him in Baghdad, and since the Arabic version of the so-called *Theology of Aristotle* was already in use[18]. However, he seems to have followed a deliberate policy of keeping his popular writings and discourses free from theological and philosophical ideas. To that extent he seems to have carefully heeded Sarī's warning: "Go to al-Muḥāsibī and accept his knowledge and disciplines, but be aware of his refutation of the Mu'tazilah"[19]. The reason for this policy is the same that lies behind his obscure discourses.

Junayd's teachers in Sufism were his uncle Sarī al-Saqaṭī (d.257/870), Ḥārith al-Muhasibī (d. 243/857) and Abu Ja'far Muḥammad al-Qaṣṣāb (d. 257/849). Sarī[20] initiated him into Sufism, and influenced him most, particularly in forming Junayd's attitude towards the Sharī'ah. "Sarī was," Qushayrī says, "unique in his time in purity, in the observance of the *Sunnah*, and in the knowledge of *tawḥīd*"[21]. In his view 'the true sufi is one the light of whose gnosis does not drown the light of his piety, whose esoteric discourses never conflict with the words of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, and whose miracles do not tear the veils that have been placed on things forbidden by God'[22]. His prayer for Junayd was: "May God make you a *muḥaddith* (i.e. scholar of Hadith) sufi and not a sufi *muḥaddith*"[23]. Junayd acknowledges his debt to Sarī when he says: "I studied law formulated by the scholars of Hadīth like Abū 'Ubayd (d. 248/838) and Abū Thawr (d. 240/834). Later I joined the company of Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī and Sarī b. Mughallath. That has been the reason of my success. Our knowledge must be controlled by conformity with the Qur'ān

and the Sunnah. Whoever has not learned the Qur'ān by heart, has not formally studied ḥadīth and fiqh before embarking on sufism, has no right to guide people"[24]. It is significant that Junayd preferred to wear the dress of a scholar rather than that of a sufi[25].

Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī was not an ascetic like Sarī, and seems to have contributed to the balance and moderation that we get in Junayd's life. However, Junayd did not follow Muḥāsibī's obsession with uncovering the hidden tricks of the carnal self *(al-nafs)* or his hair-splitting analysis of vice. He joined his company at a mature age of thirty and accepted from him what he found consistent with the spirit of the Qru'ān and the Sunnah.

About his association with Abū Ja'far Muhammad al-Qaṣṣāb Junayd says: "People associate me mainly with Sarī, but my real teacher is Muhammad al-Qaṣṣāb (d. 275/888)"[26]. It is very difficult to determine what prompted this remark, for very little is known about Junayd's association with the latter. Junayd once asked al-Qaṣṣāb about *taṣawwuf*. He replied: "*Taṣawwuf* is noble behaviour from a noble man in the company of noble men"[27]. This underlines the importance of the noble behaviour in Sufism and may have contributed to the formation of Junayd's attitude to social virtues. However, this is not enough to account for Junayd's remark referred above, about his indebtedness to al-Qaṣṣāb.

Almost all major works on Sufism contain Junayd's words and teachings. The most important among them is the *Kitāb al-Luma'* of Sarrāj (d. 378/788). However, Sulamī, Kalābādhī, Qushayrī, Hujwirī and Abū Nu'aym have also preserved many of his important words. The collection of Junayd's Letters published by 'Abd al-Qādir is particularly important for understanding his speculative ideas. A number of works have been attributed to Junayd, some of which are extant; but as 'Abd al-Qadir has shown,[28] they are not genuine, and demonstrate how people have tried to justify their own ideas by attributing them to outstanding masters of sufism.

The Sufi Path (*Ṭarīqah*)

Junayd looked upon Sufism as a higher way of life meant for the elect as opposed to the way of common people. "*Taṣawwuf*," he says "is to purge the heart from every wish to follow the path of common men. It means to relinquish natural desires *(al-akhlāq al-ṭaba'īyah)*, to wipe out human attributes *(al-ṣifāt al-basharīyah)*, to discard selfish motives *(al-ḍa'āwī al-nafsānīyah)*, to cultivate spiritual qualities *(al-ṣifāt al-rūḥānīyah)*, to devote oneself to true knowledge, to do what is best in the context of eternity, to wish good for the entire community, to be truly faithful to God, and to follow the Prophet in the matters of the Sharī'ah"[29]. This is a concise statement of the ṣufī ideal, and what follows below may be considered an elaboration of these words of Junayd.

The first step towards its realization is to practice *zuhd*, renunciation. Junayd defines *zuhd* as "keeping hands off from possessions and the heart from longing for them"[30]. In his view "the best of mankind are the poor who are happy with their poverty"[31]. However, Junayd does not seem to be very strict on this point. He does not think that renunciation of property, money or material goods is absolutely necessary for each and every sufi. For advanced Sufis, in particular, he did not consider it indispensable, and recommended rather a renunciation of the heart. To a query by one of his advanced disciples, Ruwaym[32] (d. 303/915) he defined *zuhd* as "looking down upon the world *(dunyā)* and removing every love for it from the heart"[33]. And the world he characterized as that "which clings to the heart and distracts you from God"[34]. In other words, renunciation is not so much freedom of the hand from the possession of property, money or goods, as it is freedom of the heart from being possessed by these things and of the mind from being distracted from God. Real renunciation is a quality of the mind, an inner attitude. Junayd's own life was an example of this kind of *zuhd*. He remained a merchant throughout his life and seems to have had considerable means. This has, unfortunately led some people to question the

genuineness of his abstinence[35]. Junayd had, however, no love for worldly goods; he spent little on himself, and more on his sufi friends who were poor[36]. He fasted all year round except on days he had visitors[37]. "We did not attain this thing (i.e. Sufism)", he said, "by discussions; we rather acquired it through hunger, renunciation of the world, and abstaining from things ordinarily needed and desired"[38]. On another occasion he said: "Our Sufism is based on four things: We do not speak unless we experience; do not eat unless we starve; do not sleep unless we are overpowered; and do not keep silent except for the fear of God"[39].

In his definition of the sufi ideal Junayd has referred to relinquishing natural desires as the first step. Sufism is not a matter of controlling natural desires and fulfilling them within limits; it is rather reducing them as much as possible. It stands not for moderation, but for the suppression of desires. Junayd said to one of his disciples, Khuldī, that "he did not change his dress for going to bed for forty years"[40]. Obviously that does not mean that Junayd did not prepare himself for sleep, but rather fell asleep when he was completely overpowered.

The second principle of the sufi *ṭarīqah* founded by Junayd is withdrawal from society. He was more strict on this point than on the first. He said: "One who wants to save his religion and enjoy the peace of mind and body, should keep away from men, because these are troubled times. He is wise who lives in seclusion"[41]. This remark is primarily directed against the men of means and power, in the government or outside. With respect to them Junayd's advice is absolutely clear. When Ruwaym accepted the post of a judge in the Government, Junayd expressed a strong resentment: "If you want to see a man who had hidden in his heart the love of the world for twenty years, look at this man"[42]. Similarly when his friend 'Amr b. 'Uthmān al-Makkī[43] (d.291/903-4) took up a similar post, Junayd separated himself from him[44]. He did not like to be involved in government or in politics. That might be one of the reasons why he disliked Ḥallāj (d. 309/921) and

denounced him[45]. Junayd had a very gloomy view of the world. He considered it absolutely abominable and thoroughly corrupt, and could not see safety except in withdrawal. His words are: "What happens to me in this world is not bad. For I believe in the truth that this world is a place of sorrow, anxiety, trouble and suffering. I believe that it is thoroughly evil, so it is not unexpected that it inflicts on me all that is detestable"[46].

Junayd did not, however, recommend flight from society, nor condoned the neglect of ordinary social duties that the Sharī'ah prescribes. A sufi cannot be a hermit *(rāhib)*; he has to live with all kinds of men; he is neither to avoid the poor, nor to look towards the rich[47]. He must be meek and forbearing[48]. He should not harm anyone, and must be magnanimous to all[49]. "No one can be a true gnostic", Junayd said, "unless he is like the earth that everyone, good or bad, treads with his feet; and like the clouds that protect everyone from heat; and like the rain that waters every land it likes or does not like"[50]. He also said: "The real witness to God's unity are those who live in the world as if they do not live, and withdraw from it as if they do not withdraw. They live in things with their bodies, and live away from them in their inner hearts"[51].

Junayd was married, yet he regarded marriage an impediment to the progress of the spirit. "The sufi who marries and is engaged in traditional knowledge", he said, "is of no use"[52]. A loyal female servant[53] looked after him and also after two of his friends, Nūrī[54] (d. 295/907) and Abū Ḥamzah[55] (d. 269/882). He was offered a slave girl, but he did not accept her, and presented her to a friend[56]. Junayd's *ṭarīqah* is based on the denial of the natural urges of men. This is part of what he calls "the wiping out of human attributes"[57].

The third principle of the sufi *ṭarīqah* is intensive concentration on devotions *('ibādāt)* and remembrance *(dhikr)* of God. It has been said that at his shop in the market Junayd used to pray three hundred *rak'ahs* and say thirty thousand *tasbīḥs* every day[58]. At home he prayed four hundred *rak'ahs* every night[59]. He viewed fasting as half the *ṭarīqah*[60], and as

stated above, fasted throughout the year except on days when fast was forbidden or when he had guests. Eating with friends, he said, is not inferior to fasting[61]. He maintained these devotional practices till the end of his life. When death came (297/910) he was busy in prayer, making long prostrations on the ground. Jarirī, who saw him in this state, said: "Sir, you have reached such heights, and even so you are exerting yourself so much at this hour. Would you rest a while!" Junayd replied: "I am never in greater need of it than at this moment", and went on like that till he breathed his last[62]. In his view no sufi can even outgrow the need of observing the Shari'ah. A man said to him that some gnostics of God reach a stage when they dispense with good acts and devotions. Junayd reacted sharply: "These people talk of dropping good works; this is indeed a great sin. They are worse than thieves and adulterers. The true gnostics of God take up duties from God and turn to Him fulfilling them. If I were to live for thousand years I would not stop doing even the smallest acts, unless I am prevented from them"[63]. For the last twenty years, he told one day, he had not missed the opening *takbīr* of the obligatory prayer in the mosque[64].

The sufi certainly multiplies devotion, but he is more interested in doing them better. A descendant of the Amir al-Mu'minīn 'Alī visited Junayd on his way to Hajj. Junayd said: "O Sayyid, your great grandfather had two swords: with one he fought the infidels, and with the other he fought his own self. You are his son, which of these two things you do?" Hearing this the man burst into tears and said: "Sir, my Hajj is here. Please show me the way to God". Junayd said: "Your heart is the most sacred house *(ḥaram)* of God. Don't let any thing enter into His house as far as you can". He said: "That is enough"[65].

The fourth principle of the *ṭarīqah* is sincerity*(ikhlāṣ)*. Whatever the sufi does, he must do it for the sake of God. That is, he should do his devotions, good works, and *dhikr* just because it would please God, not because it would please any

one else or secure him happiness. "Sincerity", Junayd says, "is to desire nothing but God in all that one does"[66]. Elsewhere he says: "Sincerity is to keep away creation from your relation with God; and mind you, your self is a created thing"[67]. It must be noted here that in Junayd we hardly get a statement that shows that he ever thought that there is a contradiction between seeking God's pleasure and seeking happiness in the life hereafter, as we get in Rābi'ah al-'Adawīyah[68] (d. 185/801) or Abū Yazīd (d. 261/875) before him[69].

This is, however, one aspect of sincerity. The other aspect is that the sufi should realize that whatever he does is not the result of his efforts, but a pure favour of God, "Sincerity is to avoid seeing yourself in what you do, and disappear from it"[70]. Junayd makes the same point in different ways: "To be graceful is to avoid vice, and cultivate virtue and excellence, and to work for God and then think that it is not your doing"[71]. Or, "Nobility (*futūwah*) means to forget worrying for (oneself) and stop attributing things to (oneself)"[72].

Sincere devotion and self-negating submission pave the way for the love of God, which is the fifth principle of the sufi *tarīqah*. In a gathering of elder Sufis of Mecca Junayd was asked to describe love. Tears came up in his eyes when he started saying: "The lover is a servant (of God) who departs from himself; who remembers Him constantly; who is busy in discharging his duties towards Him; who sees Him by heart; whose heart is set ablaze by the light of His Essence *(Huwīyah)*; who drinks a pure draught from the cup of His love; to whom the Almighty (*al-Jabbār*) reveals Himself from under the veils of transcendence *(ghaybah)*. If he speaks, it is by God (that he speaks); if he discourses, it is of God (that he discourses); if he moves, it is at God's command; and if he is silent, it is with God". Hearing these words the Shaykhs burst out into tears and said: "God may comfort you, O Crown of Gnostics"[73].

Love is much more than self-negating submission and sincere devotion. "It is," Junayd says, "a feeling of profound

attachment"[74]. The object of the sufi's love is primarily the Being of God, but Junayd takes care not to exclude from the orbit of that love the duties that God imposes on the sufi with regard to his own being and to his fellowmen. "Love", he says, "is an inclination of the heart, it is turning to God and to your duties spontaneously"[75]. On another occasion he said: "The essence of love *('ayn al-maḥabbah)* is that you love what God loves for His servants, and hate what He dislikes for His servants"[76].

"Living by God, for God and with God" is what Junayd elsewhere describes as replacement of the attributes of man by the attributes of God. He elaborates this point by quoting the hadith: "The servant draws near to Me by supererogatory acts till I love him. And when I love him I become his eyes by which he sees; his ears by which he hears; and his hand by which he grasps."[77]

This tradition means, first of all, that the servant of God reaches a state where the ordinary disparity between his own and God's looking at things, choosing and doing disappears. He sees things as God would like him to see, chooses as He would like him to choose and acts as He would like him to act. His perception, will and action are, in other words, replaced by God's perception, will and action. The hadith means, secondly, that God empowers His servants sometimes with such special powers to perceive, decide and act as are not ordinarily available to him, so that when he sees, hears, wills or acts, it is, as if not he but God acts in him. This is how the hadith is ordinarily interpreted.

But Junayd and other Sufis read into the hadith some-thing more. They say that whenever the sufi wills or acts anything, ordinary or extraordinary, he perceives that it is not he but God who wills and acts in him. Now this perception *(rū'yah)* may be understood in two ways. One is that whenever one chooses and does something good, one feels that his own contribution is quite small in comparison to what God has done. This perception becomes so strong that the sufi forgets his own part,

and sees only the hand of God in his doings. Junayd's words: "To be graceful is that you act for God, and then perceive that it is not you who has acted"[78] may also refer to this idea. This interpretation of the tradition is not inconsistent with what scholars of tradition understand by it. The second meaning of the perception is that the sufi perceives that he himself does not have any powers at all, and all that he apparently wills or does is in reality willed and done by God. He is no more than a hollow form *(shabah)* devoid of will and power; he does not move by himself; it is God who moves him. This perception is known in later sufi terminology as *tawḥīd fi'lī*, Oneness of the Doer. At first it is just a matter of mystical perception, but then it develops into a belief about the nature of things: it becomes a doctrine. There are statements in Junayd's writings that indicate that he actually held that doctrine. For instance:

> *Al-tawḥīd* is certitude *(al-yaqīn)*.. It is your acknowledgement that movements of things and their rest is the action of God alone without the participation of anything else. When you do this you affirm His unity in reality[79]. That is, you affirm that God alone does His acts; for nothing in fact does its acts. Certitude is the name of *tawḥīd*; when it is perfect, it becomes pure[80].

The following reply to a question put to Junayd is another instance:

> Question : Is what a person does his own action?
>
> Answer : "No, it is the act of God in you, and it demands that you should be thankful that he did (it) for you"[81].

The next important principle of the sufi *ṭarīqah* is contemplation *(murāqabah)*. "What is the way to God? Answering this question Junayd described the steps of the way: "First repentance that rules out persistence in sin; then fear that destroys vain expectations; then contemplation of God that does not allow other ideas in the heart"[82]. On another occasion he emphasized the importance of contemplation thus: "The best

and the noblest sitting is one of contemplation *(fikrah)* in the field of *tawḥīd*"[83]. Contemplation reveals truth and unveils the secrets of *tawḥīd*. Asked from whom he got the sufi knowledge, Junayd replied: "I got it from sitting before God for thirty years under these stairs", pointing to the stairs in his house[84].

Mystic Experience

Contemplation produces *fanā*. Although *fanā* is a particular stage in the spiritual development of the sufi, the word may be employed to characterize the various stages of his development we have so far described, since these are in reality the stages of self-negation *(fanā)*. Using *fanā* in this wider sense, Junayd describes the various stages as follows:

> There are three stages of *fanā*. The first is transcendence of attributes *(ṣifāt)*, dispositions *(akhlāq)* and natural *(ṭaba'ī)* desires. You attain to this by carrying out your duties, by striving hard and by opposing the carnal soul *(al-nafs)* and denying it its desires through imposing on it unpleasant things.
>
> The second stage of *fanā* is that you relinquish all thought of joy and pleasure that you may get in obeying God's command. You attain to this stage when you comply with the demands of God purely for His sake...
>
> The third stage of *fanā* is that you cease to be conscious of your ecstatic experience (of God), as a result of an overwhelming vision of God's witness *(shāhid)* to you. At this stage you die as well as live, and you live in reality, for you die to yourself and live by God. Your personal characteristics *(rasm)* survive, but your independent existence *('ism)* vanishes[85].

Of these stages the first two require no comments, since they are already discussed in the foregoing pages. We shall, therefore, confine ourselves to the third stage that constitutes

fanā in the technical sense of the term. The first thing that Junayd makes clear is that the extraordinary experience of *fanā* is essentially a matter of God's witness made entirely on His own initiative. The sufi does not achieve it; it is given to him. Secondly, in the experience of *fanā* the sufi participates in the real life, as his false sense of independent existence vanishes and he realizes the truth that he exists entirely by God. Thirdly, the experience does not destroy the personal identity *(rasm)* of the sufi; on the contrary, it strengthens it by making him realize his rootedness in God.

Junayd points out various characteristics of the experience of *fanā*. First, it is an affective experience. "Knowledge of the unity of God," he says, "is other than the experience of God, and the experience of God is altogether different from knowing Him"[86]. Secondly, it is an experience in which one transcends time. "The experience of *tawḥīd* is going beyond the limitations of time and entering into the expanse of eternity"[87]. Thirdly, it is an experience of oneness with God in which the sufi loses the consciousness of his identity and of things around. "Nearness to God in ecstasy *(wajd)* is union *(jam')* with God"[88]. And "*Tawḥīd* is an experience in which the consciousness of individuality vanishes and the knowledge of things is withdrawn, and God appears as He has been in eternity"[89]. At the higher stage of the experience even the consciousness of forgetting oneself is gone. At this stage *fanā* becomes perfect[90]. When one is not aware of dying to oneself, one lives (in God) entirely[91].

Fanā is participation in the "real life". But it is not the highest point of the sufi experience, nor the deepest dimension of real life. This comes out clearly in Junayd's comments on the experience of Abū Yazīd. He observes that "the reports of Abū Yazīd's experiences show that he reached the stage of pure union *('ayn al-jam')*[92] and remarks: "In spite of the high levels he had reached and the sublime language he uses in alluding to them, Abū Yazīd did not move beyond the first stages. I have not heard of words that tell of the final

perfection"[93]. This verdict on the final experience of Abū Yazīd is as we have demonstrated previously[94], not correct, and is based on incomplete reports about Abū Yazīd's experiences. However, the remark makes it quite clear that Junayd views the experience of pure union *('ayn al-jam')* as a stage in the spiritual journey of the sufi that must be transcended in order to reach the final goal.

The final stage of the sufi experience is what Abū Yazīd describes as the state of "separation after union"[95] or what Qushayri calls "second separation"[96]. Junayd sings of this state in these lines:

> You enter into the inner depths of my being and my tongue communicates with You.
> So we are one in some sense, and different in others.
> If consciousness of Your majesty makes me forget myself,
> Ecstasy brings You close to my heart[97].

In a rather difficult language Junayd describes the state of union and separation as follows:

> The sufi now exists after he has not existed. He exists in the sense he exists. He is what he is, having ceased to be himself. He, therefore, exists: exists after he has been an existing non-existent. For, he has come out of the effect of powerful intoxication to clear sobriety. His earlier vision is restored: he places things in their places, he regains his (human) attributes, regains his (personal) qualities and can pursue his acts after reaching the end destined for him.[98]

Whereas, in Junayd's description, the state of pure union is ecstatic, the state of union and separation is a state of sobriety. Junayd remarks: "Ecstasy pleases those who feel happy with it. But when God witnesses you, ecstasy disappears"[99]. The same point Qushayrī highlights through quoting the words of his teacher Abū 'Alī al-Daqqāq (d. 410/1019): "*Al-wujūd* (the "finding" (of God), i.e. the realization of God's "presence") (follows) when one rises above ecstasy; *wujūd al-Ḥaqq* does not occur except when humanity *(basharīyah)* is completely obliterated, because humanity cannot survive when truth *(al-*

ḥaqīqat) overpowers".[100] Junayd puts the same thing in these words: "Realization of God is the termination of ecstay".[101] Secondly, pure union is experienced with "restlessness, turbulence, heat, fury and *shaṭḥ*"[102], whereas the experience of union and difference is complete possession of one's senses and reason *(tamkīn)*[103]. Junayd refers to the accompanying states of the experience of pure union when he says that "One cannot attain to true gnosis and pure *tawḥīd* till one passes over the states and stations"[104]. Thirdly, mystics stationed in the state of pure union are given to making high claims *(da'āwī)*, whereas the state of union and separation is a state of humility. This is implicit in the statement already referred to, which associates *shaṭḥ* with pure union; for *shaṭḥ*, involves claim[105]. The state of union and separation, on the other hand, brings in intimacy wherein one also feels awe[106].

Tawḥīd

Tawḥīd as used in sufi literature means four different things. It refers, first, to a man's belief about God's unity, and consists essentially of some propositions about the nature of God and His relation with man and the world. These propositions may vary according to the believer's status, whether he is an ordinary man or a learned theologian. *Tawḥīd* refers, secondly, to disciplining one's life, external and internal, in the light of one's beliefs. Here again there may be differences between individuals regarding the areas of life that they subject to discipline and the emphasis they place on them. *Tawḥīd* refers, thirdly, to the mystical experience of unity or union. This *tawḥīd* is neither belief nor discipline, it is an affective experience different in some ways from ordinary affective experience. There are, as we have seen, different levels of this experience. At the initial level the mystic is conscious of his oneness or union with God; at the next higher level, he is no more conscious of himself and his union with God, he is only conscious of a pure unity. *Tawḥīd* in this sense is another name for the experience of *fanā* as described above.

At the final level of the experience, the mystic regains the consciousness of his difference from God, which is in fact a difference in unity or a separation in union. What ordinarily in academic discussions is called the unitive experience, often refers to the experience of unity at the second level, the experience of what Junayd calls pure union. *Tawḥīd* refers, fourthly, to a view of reality that arises from the mystical experience of unity. It is a combination of transcendental perception *(mushahadah)* and belief, a philosophical construction of reality, of the relation of the Eternal, as the mystics put it, with the contingent in the light of the mystical experience. *Tawḥīd* in this sense is not found in earlier Sufis; it starts with Junayd who initiated the sufi doctrine as he laid the foundations of the sufi *ṭarīqah*. *Ma'rifah* means many things in the early sufi literature; in its technical sense of a super-rational knowledge of reality it is another name for *tawḥīd* in the last sense.

Our sources record a number of definitions that Junayd offers of *tawḥīd*. Some refer to belief[107], some to practical discipline[108], and some to mystical experience[109]. Rather than rehearsing these definitions, we would like to draw attention to the following passage from a letter published by 'Abd al-Qādir in which Junayd distinguishes four ways of *tawḥīd*:

> Know that there are four ways of *tawḥīd* among people. One is the *tawḥīd* of the common man; the second is the *tawḥīd* of the people versed in exoteric knowledge; the other two forms of *tawḥīd* are of the elect, that is, the people of gnosis *(ma'rifah)*.
>
> The *tawḥīd* of the common man is to profess God's unity *(waḥdānīyah)*, to negate all other gods, equal or unequal or qualified with any of His attributes, while entertaining, however, hopes and fears in forces other than God. The essence of this *tawḥīd* lies in action along with profession.
>
> The *tawḥīd* of people who are well versed in exoteric knowledge is to profess God's unity, deny all other gods, equal or unequal or qualified with any of His attributes,

and to comply with His commands and prohibitions in external behaviour out of fear or hope, desire and greed. These people realize the truth of *tawḥīd* in behaviour because they really believe in what they profess.

As for the first form of *tawḥīd* of the elect, it is to profess God's unity, to negate all gods as mentioned above, and to comply with God's command externally as well as internally by removing all hopes and fears in things other than God. This arises from the seer's desire to follow (the will of God) as a result of God's witness to him wherein he is aware of God's call to him and his response to God.

The next stage of *tawḥīd* of the elect is to stand before God face to face with no one in between, like an empty form *(shabaḥ)* on whom His decress pass as He in His omnipotence determines, and to be immersed deep in the waters of *tawḥīd* wherein a person is no more conscious of himself and of God's call to him and his response to it. This is the result of the realization of God's unity in the experience of His nearness, in which he loses consciousness of his self and his activity as God does for him what He has willed of him. This means that a person becomes what he was before he comes into existence.

The argument for this is the word of God: "And (remember) when your Lord brought forth from the reins of the children of Adam their descendants and called them to witness about themselves (as He said): 'Am I not your Lord?' They responded: 'Yea, certainly.'"

Now, who existed, and how did they exist before they came into existence? Did anyone respond except pure, holy spirits to implement what the Almighty decreed and the Absolute Will commanded? They exist now as they existed before they came into existence. This is the perfection of witness to the unity of the One: "He ceases to exist"[110].

It seems appropriate to add a few comments on Junayd's description of the different meanings of *tawḥīd* for the ordinary Muslim, the scholars and the sufis. The ordinary Muslim denies the existence of visible gods, but does not free himself from the service of invisible gods, because he continues to fear forces other than God and seeks their favour. The *'ulamā* deny any invisible gods because they have realized that hopes and fears in forces other than God are contrary to true belief in one God. They are, nevertheless, far from reaching the summit of *tawḥīd*, because they comply to God's commands not for the sake of God alone, but for some benefits they want to secure or some harms they want to ward off. Their obedience to God is, in other words, not out of mere love for God. The highest stage of *tawḥīd* is reserved for the people whom God has chosen in eternity. They alone are favoured with the experience of God's witness, which opens the way for the higher stage of *tawḥīd*. It removes the last traces of self-seeking and enables the seer to follow God's will just for its own sake. Junayd is quite explicit in asserting that a disinterested, selfless obedience to God is impossible without the experience of God's witness. Since this is available only through following the sufi *ṭarīqah*, the higher stages of *tawḥīd* are accessible to sufis only, which is Junayd's justification for the sufi *ṭarīqah*. It may be noted here that this belief is shared by the majority of sufis.

At the first stage of the experience of God's witness, the sufi is conscious of his self, conscious of God's command and conscious of his response of compliance to the command. At the next stage, however, he has such a profound feeling of nearness *(qurb)* to God that he ceases to be conscious of his self or of being commanded by God, and of his response to it. All these forms of consciousness vanish, and are replaced by the consciousness of God and His action. He certainly does what God likes him to do, but he does not see that he does; he further sees that it is God who does in him. He is reduced to an empty form without a will or movement of his own. He is like a straw in the ocean of Divinity tossed to and fro by its mighty waves.

We must carefully note the words Junayd chooses to describe the final state of *tawḥīd*. It is an experience of nearness *(qurb)*, rather than union: the sufi stands with God in closest proximity, he is not one with Him. He is certainly not conscious of the distinctions of God calling *(da'wah)* and his response *(istijābah)*, but that is the effect of his profound experience of nearness, not of union or oneness. The sufi does not perceive that he acts, he only perceives that God acts in him. There is only the will of God and His action. This is the highest truth which the sufi realizes in the final state of his experience.

The final experience is not the experience of One Being *(waḥdat al-wujūd)*, it is an experience of One Actor *(waḥdat al-fā'il)*. It negates not the multiplicity of beings, but the multiplicity of actors, and reveals not the unity of being but the unity of doing. The last part of the passage that we have quoted above is an effort by Junayd to determine the nature of human existence in the light of this experience and seek support for his views from the Qur'ān. He starts by referring to the verse in the Qur'ān that speaks of a pre-mordial covenant between God and human souls in which they were asked to testify to God's lordship, which they most readily did. He infers from the verse that human souls have a kind of existence before they actually come into existence. For if they had not existed in any sense, they could not have been addressed and could not have testified. But it is also equally true that they could not have had an existence separate from the existence of God, for that would mean the eternity of the souls and would be in conflict with the Islamic belief that the souls are created. They must have, therefore, an existence that is in between existence and non-existence. They did not exist in that they did not have an independent existence, and they existed in so far as they existed in and by God. They were one with God as well as different from Him.

It is the same kind of existence which the sufi in the final stage of his experience comes to realize. Hence the ideal of the sufi is to return to a state of existence that he had before he

actually came to exist, "to be as he was before he was", as Junayd says. The reason why such a state is commendable and should be the ideal for the sufi is that it is a state when the dominance of God over the human soul is perfect and the submission of the soul to God's command spontaneous and absolute. Junayd discusses these points in two of his letters, one on the subject of *Fanā* and the other on the Eternal Covenant. In the former he writes:

> Don't you know the words of God: "When your Lord took out from the children of Adam... (up to the word) 'We testify'"[111]. Thus He tells that He addressed them when they did not exist, except by His consciousness of them *(bi wujudihī lahum)*;[112] for He was conscious of *(wājid)* His creatures in a sense different from His consciousness of their being (in the world), conscious in a sense which no one knows or has an experience of except Him. Indeed He was conscious of them, encompassed them, and witnessed them in the beginning when they were dead (to themselves) because they lived (in God). They lived (in eternity) for Eternity. This is the Godly existence *(al-wujūd al- rabbānī)* and the Divine awareness *(al-idrāk al-ilāhī)* which is for no one except Him, be He glorified!
>
> That is why we said that when He was conscious of man His will was working in him as He wished, in a transcendental way unique to Him, in which no one else participates. This existence was the most perfect existence and necessarily the most active. It was the best existence, the most submissive to (God's) power and rule, and the most compliant to His decrees that passed over him to such an extent that his identifying characteristics *(rasm)* were wiped out and his existence *(wujūd)* obliterated. For it had no human attribute or existence that, as we have said, was not dependent on God, and consequently, not under the control and authority of God. In fact these (human attributes and existence) are the dress which the souls put on (in the world), and which do not belong to

them (from eternity). However, they are a blessing different from other blessings, and a real gift different from other known gifts. For God neither perceives with senses, nor is He perceived by the senses. His essence does not suffer change, and His blessings on His creation are beyond comprehension. They are in truth divine, no one knows them except God, and no one can grant them except Him. This is why we said that God destroys what is imposed on it (i.e., the soul). When He dominates, He deserves to dominate, to rule and to control[113].

In the letter on the Eternal Covenant he writes:

God created them near Him in the state of eternity with Him as vehicles for His unity to mount when He called them (to witness) and they responded – a response that was an act of grace by Him upon them. In fact He responded for them when He created them: He made them understand His call and know Himself while they were nothing more than an idea *(mashī'ah)* that He put to Himself. He transferred them, raised them as seeds, produced them by His will into beings *(khalq)* and put them in the loins of Adam. Then He said: "And (remember) when your Lord brought forth from the reins of the children of Adam their descendants and called them to witness about themselves (as He said) 'Am I not your Lord?'..." Thus God tells that He addressed them when they did not exist except by His consciousness of them *(wujudihī lahum)*, when they were conscious of God *(wājidīn li l-Ḥaqq)* without being conscious of themselves *(min ghayr wujūdihim li anfusihim)*. God was really present in that (consciousness) in a sense known to or comprehended by none except Him. He knew them *(wājid)*, encompassed them and witnessed them, He originated them when they were dead to themselves, when they existed in eternity for Eternity. They are the ones that truly exist, the ones that are dead in a state of nothingness *(fanā'ihim)* and alive in a state of (eternal) life

(baqā'ihim)... He perfected their death in their life and their life in their death. His decrees encompass them when He enforces His will on them, as He likes in his own transcendental way that no one shares. Hence this existence is the most perfect existence, the best, the most subservient to God's rule and power, and the most submissive to His decrees regarding them, so much so that their identity, individuality and existence are obliterated. For it has (in that state) no human characteristics (and) no tangible existence...: all of them are the outer garments of the souls, not belonging to them from eternity[114].

It is quite clear from these passages that the souls of men existed with God as His ideas, for they "did not exist except by God's consciousness of them". They existed as His ideas which He knew and which He encompassed. They were dead in that they had no independent existence; they were alive in that they were conscious of God. Moreover, they existed for God to witness to His Lordship in eternity. But since they existed in such a way as to be able to witness to His Lordship, they were, therefore, more than ideas. They had thus two aspects: on the one hand they were ideas existing in God which He knew and encompassed, and, on the other, they were realities that were conscious of God and had the capacity to respond to God's call. It is the latter aspect which Junayd calls a "godly existence", and since it is nothing but an idea in God, he also characterizes it as "intuitive awareness". The basis for deeming this state the best state is not its ideality in a Greek philosophical sense, but its quality to submit most completely to God's rule.

The third point which these passages make clear is that the souls in their ideal state are in fact without a will. When they comply to God's call it is not they, but God who complies to His own call in them. The will that is one of the characteristics of man in his worldly existence, is given to him in this existence, and does not belong to him originally. It is important to note that in spite of that fact, Junayd calls it a blessing of

God, and not a curse. He does not believe that human nature is evil, as some Christians do. The task of the sufi is to subject this acquired will to complete submission to God, or in the words of Junayd: to be replaced by the will of God. This is the task which God's witness to the sufi achieves. It destroys the independence of human will and renders it completely submissive as if he did not have a will, and turns him again to a state of no will, as he was in eternity before he came into this world.

These ideas of Junayd were somewhat different from the popular belief of the time. The common man believed that the human soul is created and non-eternal. This was the view also of the scholars of tradition and the theologians of the time. According to Junayd, however, the soul is in a sense eternal and uncreated. The common man also believed that he had a will and that he was the doer of his own acts. Although he recognized the overruling power of God and His grace *(tawfīq)*, he did not believe that God did his acts. Traditional scholars and theologians regarded God the creator of acts and not their doer. To believe that God is the real actor, and to hold it as the ultimate truth, as Junayd does, would mean for them and for the common man to side with the determinists of the time, like the *Jahmīyah* and the *Karrāmiyah*. (It may be noted that the doctrine of *kasb* was yet to be born). The third point that must have sounded strange to the common man and scandalized the doctors of tradition was Junayd's claim that the mystic experience yields a knowledge which is not available to reason, nor discoverable through the kind of reflection over revelation which is not guided by mystical experience. It is quite obvious that the real basis of the doctrine of One Actor is Junayd's experience of *fanā'* rather than the covenant verse of the Qur'an which he cites. We quoted earlier Junayd's statement about the way he obtained the sufi knowledge "by sitting before God for thirty years beneath these stairs"[115].

Conscious that his teachings were on some points different from the beliefs of the common Muslim as well as the scholars,

Junayd naturally feared unpleasant consequences if the differences would become widely known. That is why he put his thoughts in a exceedingly difficult and obscure language, and refrained from talking about them in public. He also did not like his disciples and friends talking about them publicly, and admonished on one occasion Shiblī for his unrestrained words saying: "We put this knowledge in an embellished language and conceal it in underground tunnels. But you come and pronounce it in public"[116].

The foregoing analysis contains, we think, all basic ideas Junayd expounded. There are, no doubt, some very important issues which Junayd did not discuss, others he did not even raise. He found in his mystical experience a complete negation of will, and his speculation was only concerned with providing a justification for that experience. He did not raise the question as to who the subject is of other human acts (faith, knowledge, suffering and happiness): man himself, as we commonly believe, or God? He did not pursue the question whether existence is one, or what the relation is between human and Divine existence. To attribute to him, therefore, a monism of existence *(tawḥīd wujūdī)* as Massignon does[117], or even a unity of attributes *(tawḥīd ṣifātī)*, is totally inappropriate. He did develop a doctrine of the unity of action *(tawḥīd fi'lī)*, which may be regarded as an act of transcendentalization *(tanzīh)* as the Ashā'irah did later, as well as of immanentization, which is, in a way, the first step towards a monism of being[118].

Notes and References

1. Qushayri, *al-Risālah*, opt, cit. p.116
2. Hujoori, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, opt. cit. p.161.
3. Attar, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, opt. cit. Vol.II:5
4. Jāmī, Nafaḥāt al-Uns, opt. cit. p53
5. Walī Allāh, Shāh, Hama'āt, ed. Nur al-Haqq (Hyderabad (Pak.), Shāh Walī Allāh Academy, 1941), p.3
6. On the basis of the tittle that is known of the Sufis before Junayd, it is difficult to attribute any definite doctrines about reality to them; this task becomes even more difficult in view of the fact that many of their words are liable to more than one interpretation. The only Sufi about whom we have come to know more is Abū Yazīd al-Bistāmī (d.261/874); this has been made possible, as we have said, by the publication of the collection of his words prepared by Sahlajī under the name *Al-Nūr min Kalimāt Abī Ṭayfūr*, by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badwī under the title *Shaṭḥāt al-Sūfīyah* (Kuwait, 1976). This collection, as I have said, contains a description of his mystical experiences, but little reflection on his experiences and no doctrines in the strict sense.
7. For the biography of Junayd see Abū al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), *Ṭabaqāt al-Sūfīyah*, pp.141ff; Abū Nu'aym al-Isfahānī (d.430/1038-39), *Ḥilayt al-Awliyā'* (Beirut, n.d.), vol.X, 357ff; Al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī (d.463/1070-71), *Tārikh Baghdād* (Cairo, 1349/1931), VII,242 ff; Al-Yafi'I (d.654/1256), *Mir'at al-Jinān* (Beirut, n.d.), Vol.II, p.233; Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282), *Wafayat al-A'yān*, Vol.I, 208ff; Al-Subkī (d. 772/1370), *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyah* (Cairo, 1324/1906-1907), Vol.II, 28-36; Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), *Al-Bidāyah wa 'l-Nihāyah* (Beirut, n.d.), Vol.XI, 114; Ibn al-'Imād (d.1089/1679), *Shadharāt al-Dhabab* (Beirut, n.d.), II, 228-29.
8. Subkī, *Tabaqat al-Shāfi'iyah*, II, 28
9. Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, VII, 242
10. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, I, 208
11. Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, VII, 243

12. Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyah*, II, 28
13. Baghdādī, *Tārikh Baghdād*, VII, 242
14. Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-Luma'*, ed. 'Abd al-Halīm Maḥmūd and Ṭāhā 'Abd al-Bāqī Sarwar (Cairo, 1380/1960), pp. 318-19
15. Ibid., pp. 310-14
16. 'Alī Ḥasan Abdel Kādir, *The life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd* contains the Arabic text of 18 letters of Junayd under the title: Rasā'il al-Junayd (London Luzac & Co., Gibb Memorial Series, 1962)
17. Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Hārith b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī (d.243/857), a leading sufi of Baghdad is known for his writings on sufi psychological ethics, particularly motivation. *Al-Ri'āyah li Ḥuqūq Allāh* is his best work. Margaret Smith has studied his ideas in her Al-Muḥāsibī: *An Early Mystic of Baghdad* (Admsterdam: Philo Press, 1935).
18. The *Theology of Aristotle* is actually an abridgement of Plotinus' *Enneads*, IV-Vi. It was rendered into Arabic in the caliphate of al-Mu'tasim (218/833-251/865).
19. Abdel Kadir, *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd*, p.3.
20. Abu `l-Ḥasan Sarī b. Mughallath al-Saqaṭī (d. 257/870), a disciple of Ma'ruf al-Karkhī (d. 200/815), and an eminent sufi, was known for his renunciation and intensive devotions. Al-Sulamī regards him to be the first sufi who taught *tawḥīd* and used symbolic expressions (*isāhrāt*)
21. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.64
22. Ibid, p.65
23. Abdel Kādir, *The Life, Personality and Writings of Al-Junayd*, p.3
24. Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'īyah*, II, 36
25. 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, II, 10
26. Baghdādī, *Tārikh Baghdād*, III, 61
27. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.552
28. Abdel Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd*, pp.62-63

29. Khalābādhī, *Al-Ta'arruf li Madhhāb ahl al-Taṣawwuf* (Cairo) al-Ḥalabī, 1380 A.H. p.34
30. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.259
31. Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-Luma'*, p.293
32. Abū Muḥammad Ruwaym b. Aḥmad (d.303/915), a friend and a disciple of Junayd, was one of the top-ranking sufi teachers of Baghdad. He was also a good scholar of Ẓāhirī fiqh, and served as Qāḍī at the court. Qushayrī, *Al-Risālah* p.127; Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt* pp.86-98
33. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.295
34. Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, I, 27
35. Abdel Kādir, *The Life, Personality and Writings of Al-Junayd*, p.50
36. Ibid, p.49
37. 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, II, 10
38. Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyah*, p. 144
39. Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyah*, II,36
40. Ibid, p.28
41. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.226
42. Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, X, 268
43. 'Amr b. 'Uthmān al-Makkī (d.292/903-4) is described by Qushayrī as "a leading authority in sufi doctrine and practice." He was the second teacher of Ḥallāj, but when the latter started preaching his new ideas 'Uthmān truned against him, (Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.636; Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah, XI, 135).
44. Ibn al-'Imād, Shadharāt, V, 255
45. Different reasons have been offered for Junayd's reaction. Hujwirī says that after breaking from 'Uthmān, when Husayn sought to join the company of Junayd, the latter refused saying: "I do not take mad people (*majānīn*) in may company, for company requires sobriety (*ṣaḥw*)" (*Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, p.235). Husayn's son, Ahmad, tells that his father went to Junayd to ask for his opinion on some issues, but Junayd refused and charged him that he wanted to test him rather than to learn from him (Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, VIII, 112). The author of Ḥusayn's

Apology, *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, (ed. L. Massignon and Paul Kraus, Paris 1936, p.38) says that Husayn had a discussion with Junayd which ended with Junayd's remark: "I see no sense in your words. What wood will you spoil with your blood!" The ground for what we have suggested is Junayd's general attitude towards involvement in politics and administration, and Husayn's connection and sympathies with movements that had political overtones.

46. Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iah*, II,30
47. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.476
48. Ibid, p.343
49. Ibid, p.474
50. Ibid, p.606
51. Al- Sarraj, *Al-Lumā'*, p. 422
52. 'Aṭṭār *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, II, 22
53. Abdel Kādir, *The Life, Personality and Writings of Al-Junayd*, p.50
54. Abu'l-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Nūrī (d. 295/987-88), was born and brought up at Baghdad, though his ancesorts came from Khorasan. He was given to ecstatic experiences and prolonged trances. He wrote verses, used allegorical expressions and indulged in *shaṭḥ*. Junayd however, was on friendly terms with him and had respect for him (Hujwirī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*), Eng. Trans, R.A. Nicholson, London, Luzac & Co., Gibb memorial Series, no. 17,1911, p.189)
55. Abū Ḥamzah (d. 269/892) was another ecstatic friend of Junayd. One Friday when he was talking on some sufi subjects, he went into a trance, fell down from his chair and died (Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.150)
56. Abdel Kādir, *The Life, Personality and Writings of Al-Junayd*, p.50
57. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.171
58. Subkī, *Ṭaabaqāt al-Shāfi'iah*, opt.cit., II, 28
59. Ibid (Cairo 1964 ed.) Vol.II, p.261
60. Hujwirī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, p.413
61. 'Aṭṭār *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, II, 10

62. Sarrāj, *Al-Luma'*, p.281
63. Abu Nu'aym, *Ḥilayt al-Awliyā'*, X, 278; Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.106
64. 'Aṭṭār *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, II,9
65. Ibid, II, 21
66. Kalabādhī, *al-Ta'arruf*, p.118
67. Sarraj, *Al-Luma'*, p.290
68. This is a very common theme in Rābī'a al-Adawiyah's (d. 185/801) sayings, which seems to have emerged from her state of *fanā*. One, for instance, is: "I am going to light a fire in Paradise and pour water on the Hell, So that both veils may completely disappear from the pilgrims, and their purpose may be sure, and the servants of God may see Him, without any object of hope or motive of fear." (Margaret Smith, *Readings from the Mystics of Islām* (London: Luzac & Co., 1972, pp. 10-11). The same author has also studied her in *Rabi'a The Mystic and Her Fellow Saints in Islam* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1974).
69. For Abū Yazīd b. Ṭayfūr b. 'Isa al-Biṣṭāmī (d. 261/874) *see supra* ch. II
70. Sarrāj, *Al-Luma'*, p.289
71. Ibid, p.296
72. Hujwiri, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, p. 154
73. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.623
74. Ibid, p.617; Kalabādhī, *Al-Ta'arruf*, p. 130
75. Kalabādhī, *Al-Ta'arruf*, p.130
76. Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iah*, p.149
77. Bukhāri, *Ṣaḥiḥ*, K. al-Riqāq, 38
78. Sarrāj, *Al-Luma'*, p.296
79. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.36
80. Abu Nu'aym, *Ḥilyat al-Awlīyā'*, X, 256
81. Ibid, X, 268
82. Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'īah*, p.30
83. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, pp.47-48
84. Baghdadī, *Tārīkh Baghdad*, VII, 245
85. Abdel Kadir, *Rasā'il al-Junayd*, p. 55
86. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.226

87. Sarrāj, *Al-Luma'*, p.49
88. Ibid, p.284
89. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.583
90. Sarrāj, *Al-Luma'*, p.49
91. Ibid, p.285
92. Ibid, p.450
93. Ibid, p.479
94. See *supra*, chap.II
95. Sahlajī, *Al-Nur min Kalimāt abī Ṭayfūr*, pp. 101, 106
96. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.226
97. Ibid, pp. 226-27
98. Abdel Kadir, *Rasa'il al-Junayd*, pp. 51-52
99. Kalābādhī, *Al-Ta'arruf*, p. 134
100. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.203 Cf. See the remark of Annermarie Schimmel: "For the word *wujūd*, which is usually translated as existence, means, originally, the `being found' – and that is what the mystic experiences" in her *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 142
101. 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, II, 25
102. Sarrāj, *Al-Luma'*, p.488
103. Ibid, p.488
104. Ibid, p.436
105. Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj defines *shaṭḥ* as a "language which expresses an ecstatic experience (*wajd*) that flows from its source and carries a claim," (*al-Luma'*, p. 428), while Ibn 'Arabī describes it as "the expression of an idea that has an element of arrogance and claim." He then adds: "It is hardly found in people who have realized the truth (*al-Muḥaqqiqīn*) and observe the Shari'ah" (*Al-Futūhāt al-Makkīyyah)* Beirut: Dar al-Ṣadir, n.d., vol. II, p.133 (ch. 73, question 153).
106. Sarrāj, *Al-Luma'*, p.97
107. For instance: "*Al-Tawḥīd* is that you believe and profess that God is only one from eternity, that there is none beside Him, and nothing does His work." (Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.31)

108. For instance: "*Al-Tawḥīd* which is the privilege of the Sufis is to isolate the Eternal from the temporal, to leave the places in which you live, the objects you love, and the things you know or don't know, and let God take their place." (Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.586)
109. For instance: "*Al-Tawḥīd* is to transcend the limitations of time, and enter into the expanse of eternity." (Sarrāj, *Al-Luma'*, p.49)
110. Abdel Kadir, *Rasā`il al-Junayd*, pp. 55-56
111. Al-Quran 7:172
112. Professor R.C. Zaehner renders this sentence as: "God addressed (the human souls when they did not (yet) exist except in so far as he "existed" them (*wujudihī lahum*); for he was (eternally) "existing" (his) creation in a manner that was different from his "existing" individual souls (*anfus*), in a maner that he alone knows..." *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism* (New York: Schoken, 1960) p.146. I do not think that *wujūd* and *wājid* can be rendered here by `existing' (bringing into existence), for which only the transitive from *ījād* (verb *awjada*) is used.
113. Abdel Kadir, *Rasā'il al-Junayd*, pp.32-33
114. Ibid, pp.41-42
115. See note 84 above
116. Kalabādhī, *Al-Ta'arruf*, p.172
117. Massignon characterizes Junayd's view as a "coherent but empty monism." This is not correct. Abdel Kadir in his study on Junayd's work and Zaehner in his *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, (p.37 text and footnote) have also challenged this interpretion.
118. The seventeenth century Indian Sufi reformer, Aḥmad Sirhindī (971/1564-1034/1624) considers *tawḥīd fi'lī* the root cause of blasphemy *(zandaqah). Maktūbāt Imām Rabbānī* (Nur Muhammad edition, Lahore, n.d.), I, letter 30.

Ḥusayn Ibn Manṣūr: Ideas of an Ecstatic

Ḥusayn Ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj is remembered as the sufi who said 'I am the Real' and went boldly on the cross. The word and the event, both are awful. But they are by no means unique. Sufis before and after Ḥusayn uttered similar words. Abū Yazīd said: 'Glory to me', and Abū Sa'īd Abu l-Khayr (d.440/1040) said: 'There is none in the cloak other than God'; Nūrī (d.295/908) was driven out of his town and Ibn 'Atā' (d.709/1309) was beaten to death. To be sure, in case of Ḥusayn they assumed, for many reasons, tremendous proportions. That is why they have attracted the attention of people throughout the ages.

Louis Massignon, the great French scholar of our times was so much impressed by Ḥusayn that he dedicated almost his whole life to the study of his life and his ideas. His book, *La Passion de al-Ḥallāj*[1] is an extraordinary work, a treasury of information on the life of Ḥusayn as well as on the culture and history of the age he belonged to. However, I must add that the perspective from which he looks at Ḥusayn's life, interprets his experience and evaluates his ideas is unfortunately inspired by traditions of mysticism other than Islamic. A simple consequence of this approach is that the image of Ḥusayn which emerges from his work sharply contrasts with the one which Sufis themselves have held of him. Husayn stands out as a grand figure in comparison to whom such great personalities of Sufism as Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, Sahl ibn 'Abdullāh al-Tustarī (d.283/896), even Muḥammad al-Junayd (d.298/910) appear to be dwarfs. Following Massignon's lead, his successors, Louis Gardet and George Anawate present Ḥusayn as the highest culmination of sufism[2].

Sufis, on the other hand, view Ḥusayn in a completely different way. Some like Shaykh Aḥmad Rifā'ī (d. 580/1184)

deny that he was a *walī*[3]; some like Qushayrī (d. 465/1074) abstain from expressing any opinion[4]; some like 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166) attest to his *walāyah* but find fault with his experiences and apologize for his utterances on the ground of *sukr*[5]; and some like Niaẓāmuddīn Awliyā' (d. 725/1334) reject his ways altogether[6]. Some do hold him in esteem, but the most that they say of him is that he was a gnostic of God *('ālim rabbānī)*[7] or that 'if there was any Unitarian *(muwaḥḥid)* after the prophets and the *ṣiddiqīn* it was Ḥusayn'[8]. But no sufi worth the name has ever exalted him over the great leaders of Sufism such as the ones I have mentioned. That Sufism reached its culmination in Ḥusayn is an idea which never occurred to the mind of any sufi.

This is not the place to discuss Massignon's view of Sufism: the way he looks at the mystical experience, the nature of the sufi enterprise, the end of the sufi *ṭarīqah*, the place of Sufism in Islam, the status of a *walī* and his role visa-vis the Prophet. This will require a volume by itself. Nor do I intend to review his interpretation of Husayn's life and thought. I only propose to present the facts of Husayn's life and experience and discuss some of his ideas in the light of the view of Sufism, which I have outlined in the Introduction or stated earlier in my Sufism and Sharī'ah[9].

Life

Most of the facts of Husayn's life have been unearthed by Massignon and everyone coming after him would be indebted to him in that respect. I am no less indebted to him on that account. I mostly differ from him on the interpretation of events. Let me first state here the bare facts of Husayn's life:

Ḥusayn was born about 244/857-8 at Ṭūr near Bayḍā' in Fāris, some eight miles from Shīrāz. His grand-father was a Zoroastrian. His father, a wood-carderer *(ḥallāj)* by profession, was the first to embrace Islam. A few years after Husayn's birth, he left Ṭūr ad settled down in the thoroughly Arabicised

town of Wāsiṭ. Husayn had his early education here, acquired great proficiency in Arabic forgetting his native Persian almost completely, and committed the Qur'ān to memory. When he was sixteen he went to Tustar to further pursue his studies. After sometime he joined the company *(ṣuḥbah)* of Sahl ibn 'Abdullāh al-Tustarī (d. 287/900), a leading sufi of the time. But he hardly passed two years there that he left for Basra. There he pursued *taṣawwuf* under the supervision of 'Amr ibn 'Uthmān al-Makkī (d. 291/904). Eighteen months later he married the daughter of a sufi colleague of 'Amr, Abū Ya'qūb al-Aqṭa' a Karnabā'ī. For some reason 'Amr did not approve of the marriage, and his relation with 'Aqṭa' and Ḥusayn were strained. Husayn went to Junayd at Baghdad, the preceptor of both 'Amr and Aqṭa', and sought his help to straighten the relations. But Junayd declined to intervene and advised Husayn to be patient and continue to honour both the Sufis[10].

The reason for 'Amr's unhappiness with Husayn's marriage in a Karnabā'ī family was most probably his fear that it might land an ambitious youth of independent mind like Husayn in political strife and impede his spiritual progress. Unfortunately what 'Amr had feared came to pass. Ḥusayn's brother-in-law in whom he came to confide more and more introduced him to a clan that supported the Zaydī rebellion of the Zanj who had been influenced in varying degrees by Shiite extremism. As a consequence Husayn came to be regarded as a Shī'ah missionary[11]. Perhaps Husayn had already developed some sympathy with the movement when he was at Tustar, which was probably the reason why he left Sahl abruptly before he could proceed in his *sulūk* to any length. 'Amr was perhaps aware of it. This rather than 'spiritual jealousy'[12] was the reason of His unhappiness with Husayn's marriage. In 270/883 the Zaydī rebellion was crushed,[13] and Husayn, fearing repressive action, left for Makkah.

At Makkah he performed *'umrah* and took up a year of fasting and prayer in the open courtyard of the *Ḥaram*. He cared little for sun or rain, and hardly moved from his seat

except for unavoidable needs or for *ṭawāf*. Every evening a jug of water and some bread was brought to him; he would take four bites from the bread, drink two swallows of water, and leave the rest to be removed in the morning[14]. It seems that he started to have visions and inspirations. 'Amr used to visit Makkah often; he happened to see him and found with him some writings. When he enquired about them Husayn said that he was trying to contest the Qur'ān[15]. 'Amr was greatly shocked at this answer; he did not expect this arrogant response from a disciple. The incident brought the already strained relations between them to an end.

After a year Husayn returned to Iraq, went to Junayd, the undisputed leader of the sufis *(Sayyid al-Ṭā'ifah)* at the time, and sought to pursue his *sulūk* under his guidance. But Junayd declined saying: 'I do not take mad people *(majānīn)* in my company'[16]. Disappointed at Baghdad, Ḥusayn came to Baṣrah and saw his wife and children who were staying with his father-in-law. Unfortunately, the latter did not welcome him either. He too was unhappy with the way Ḥusayn was conducting himself. Ḥusayn took his family and left for Tustar where his brother-in-law was staying. Determined to pursue the sufi path, whatever may be the odds, Ḥusayn gave himself to *dhikr*, prayer and sincere penances. Within a short time he became famous for his asceticism and austere practices. Miracles often happen at the hands of such sufis, and they came to Husayn too. But unlike them he did not try to hide them or restrain himself from them. Instead he indulged in them freely, resorted at times to some undesirable methods, such as utilizing the services of jinns. His popularity increased and disciples gathered round him. He assumed the role of a *shaykh* and started teaching and instructing.

Sufis are not supposed to take up teaching and guidance unless they complete their *sulūk*, and are authorized by their preceptors. Ḥusayn had not completed his *sulūk*, and had no teacher to authorize him. His rapturous condition for which Junayd refused him disqualified him further; for guiding, one

has to be sober and in full possession of one-self. Yet Ḥusayn appointed himself as a Shaykh (Sufi Master). This stance was opposed by the sufis of the time. 'Amr, in particular, strongly disapproved of it. He wrote letters to people in different cities warning them against him and his ideas and practices[17].

Instead of changing his ways, Husayn reacted sharply to the opposition of the sufis. He broke with the entire community, discarded its symbolic dress, donned like a soldier, mixed with people of the world, and started delivering sermons in popular style[18]. Some of those who later rose to important positions at Baghdad became his disciple, while others condemned him and incited people against him. It was not wise for him to stay at Tustar any more. He entrusted his family to some friends and left. When he was in Jabal, he was arrested and flagellated on the charge of supporting the Zaydī or Qarmathean cause and detained for a short time[19].

After he was released he proceeded on a long journey to Ṭāliqān, Kuhistān, Juzjān and Balkh. When he reached Māwarā' l-Nahr he retraced his steps. Passing through Sajistān and Kirmān, and stopping for some time at Fāris, where he wrote his first book, he came to Ahwāz where his family joined him after five years in 279/892. At Ahwāz Ḥusayn addressed different sections of the people, expounded his ideas openly, and worked wonders. He told people the secrets of their heart, which won him the title of the Carderer of Secrets *(Ḥallāj al-Asrār)*, offered them things of summer in winter, and things of winter in summer[20].

From Ahwāz Ḥusayn went to Baṣra, where he maintained a low profile, spending most of his time in *dhikr* and devotion. After a period he took four hundred disciples, all clad in patched clothes *(muraqqa'ah)*, and went for Ḥajj, the second time in 281/894. Reaching Makkah, most of the disciples dispersed in the city; with the rest Ḥusayn went to the mount Abū Qubays. After the dinner he offered to entertain them with the sweets of Zabīd. Abū Ya'qūb Isḥāq ibn Muḥammad Nahrajūrī (d. 330/941), a close friend of Husayn was not happy

with this show of miracle and accused him of making pact with jinns[21].

After the Ḥajj, Husayn went to Basra, and then to Ahwaz to see his family. He did not stay there for long, and left with his family and brother-in-law for Baghdad where he succeded to install them with the help of the secretary of state, Ḥāmid Qunnā'ī. Here he met an aging sufi, Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Nūrī (d. 295/908) and a young ecstatic like him, Abu Bakr al-Shiblī (d. 334/946) who became a close friend[22]. In 284/894, he went out again on a long journey of the East with a diplomatic envoy of Mu'taḍid (279/891 – 299/920). Travelling through Western India he went to Turkistān and Māṣīn, the capital of Ughar Turks who were Manichians by religion. Thereafter, he returned to Baghdad by way of Khurasan, Nihawand and Dinawar[23].

Throughout his journey (284/897 – 289/902) Husayn preached to the people and called them to Allah, visited sufi centers, spoke of his experiences, set forth his ideas and worked wonders. The impression that he left on the people can be gauged from the titles by which men writing from different places, addressed him in their letters. From India they addressed him as *al-Mughīth*, the Saviour; from Masin and Turkistan as *al-Muqīt*, the Nourisher; from Faris as Abdullah *al-Zāhid*, the Ascetic; from Khurasan as *al-Mumayyiz*, the Discerner; from Khusistan as *Ḥallāj al-Asrār*, the Carderer of Secrets; from Basra as *al-Muḥayyar*, the Dazed; while the people of Baghdad called him *al-Muṣtalim*, the Enraptured[24]. He thus appeared to people as a sufi engrossed in God, enraptured and intoxicated, with miraculous powers of reading hidden thoughts, relieving people of their suffering and fulfilling their wishes.

In 290/902 Ḥusayn left for his third and final Ḥajj clad in a piece of patched clothes *(muraqqa'ah)* thrown round his shoulders, and an Indian lion cloth *(fūṭah)* round his waist. When he was at'Arafāt he beat his chest in a state of rapture and prayed God that he may efface himself in Him

completely[25]. After Hajj he visited Madinah and then Jerusalem. In 292/905 when he returned to Baghdad he changed his life style completely. He acquired property, built a house, in a portion of which he made *ṭawāf*, celebrated the *'Id al-Qurbān*, and performed the rites of Ḥajj every year[26]. At night he prayed at the grave of Ibn Ḥanbal, in day he sang his union with God and indulged in *shaṭḥ*. It was in this state that he exclaimed: 'I am the Real' *(Anā l-Ḥaqq)*. Other Sufis in this state keep away from people, but Ḥusayn mixed with them in the markets and the mosques, talked of his experiences and feelings, and pleaded to them to kill him in order that he may attain permanent union with God, while they save their religion from his blasphemous words.

The deteriorating conditions of the Caliphate at the time had given rise to a movement of reform. Ḥallāj dedicated some of his writings to the leaders of the movement[27]. In 296/908 an unsuccessful attempt was made to seize power and raise Ibn al-Mu'tazz to the throne. The move failed and al-Muqtadir was restored by his Shiite *wazīr* Ibn al-Furāt. During the hunt of the reformers that followed, Ḥusayn fled to Sūs in Ahwāz. Four of his disciples were arrested. Three years later, he, too, was caught, brought to Baghdad and put in jail, where he remained for nine years till the end of his life. When Ibn 'Isā, the cousin of Ḥāmid Qunnā'ī, his disciple, became *wazīr*, he closed down the trial and set free the reformers. But Ḥusayn could not be released; instead he was exposed for three days on the pillory with 'Qarmathian agent' written on his fore-head[28]. Later he was confined in the palace. In 304/916 Ibn al-Furāt replaced Ibn 'Isā, but the influence of the Queen mother prevented him from reopening the trial. Probably Ḥusayn wrote a part of his *Ṭawāsīn* and his tract on *Mi'rāj* during this period.

In 308-9/921-2 when Ḥāmid was made wazīr, he reopened the trial. Several charges were brought against Ḥusayn that he claimed union with God, that God had entered him, that he was misleading people with his miracles and tricks, that his followers worshipped him, that he was undermining the

Sharī'ah and preaching a form of Ḥajj which every one could do at home[29]. When his sufi friends were questioned about his claim, *'Anā l-Ḥaqq'* (I am the Real), Shiblī said that he sould be stopped from saying that, and Abū Muḥammad Jarīrī (d. 311/924) said that he was an infidel and should be killed. Only Ibn 'Aṭā' (d. 309/922) defended him, and was ill-treated by the guards and died of the blows he received[30]. The Mālikī qāḍī, Abū 'Amr condemned him and pronounced the death sentence. The verdict was then signed by other members of the jury. The Caliph ordered the sentence to be carried out. Ḥusayn was beaten, his hands and legs were cut off, and in the end executed. His body was sprinkled with oil and put on fire. Throughout this whole ordeal Ḥusayn displayed extra-ordinary courage and patience. Unlike his reaction at the earlier stage of the trial when he protested strongly that it was not right to kill him, he submitted this time to his fate calmly and coolly. May God have mercy on him.

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Treading the Sufi Path (*Sulūk*) and Mystic Experiences

Of all the early sufi writers Hujwirī (d. 465/072) has the greatest regard for Ḥusayn. He recognizes his *walāyah*, mentions him along with other Sufis, and defends him against various charges. He has also written a separate book on Ḥusayn explaining his words, which unfortunately is not extant. However, at the end of his discussion on Ḥusayn in *Kashf al-Muḥjūb*, he writes:

> "His words are not to be followed; for he is overpowered by his experience *(maghlūb al-ḥāl)*, and is not in control of himself *(mutamakkin)*. One should only follow the words of a *mutamakkin*. Ḥusayn, thank God, is very dear to me. But his *ṭarīqah* is not based on any sound principles; his states are not settled, and his experiences are fraught with danger"[31].

These observations on Husayn's *ṭarīqah*, experiences and states are confirmed by many Sufis who have no reservation

about his *walāyah*. For instance Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (d. 561/1166) writes:

> "Husayn stumbled and fell on the way; no one could hold his hand. Had I been in his time I would have held his hand"[32].

Let me review Ḥusayn's *ṭarīqah*, experiences and states and see what is there which called for these remarks and lead to his tragic end. The first thing to note in this regard is that Ḥusayn did not benefit properly by the guidance of his teachers. In fact, leaving out the initial stage of his *sulūk* which was supervised by his teachers, he traversed the rest of the path all by himself. He, therefore, could not avoid the pitfalls of the road, made mistakes and as Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir says, stumbled in the way.

He went first to Shal Ibn 'Abdullāh al-Tustarī at the age of sixteen and was initiated into Sufism. But before he could proceed to any length, he left him. Hujwerī says that 'Ḥusayn left Sahl before he achieved anything' *(be dastūrī)*[33]. Qushayrī hails Sahl as one of the leaders *(a'immah)* of the community, who had no peers in his times in his works and in his piety[34]. The reason why Ḥusayn left Sahl like that probably had to do, as I have said earlier, with the interest in political movements that Ḥusayn started taking. After Sahl, he joined the company of 'Amr Ibn 'Uthman al-Makkī whom Qushayrī calls the master of the Sufis *(Shaykh al-Qawm)* and leader of the group *(imām al-ṭā'ifah)* in doctrine and practice *(al-uṣūl wa l-ṭarīqah)*[35]. But his marriage in a Karnabā'ī family strained their relations and deprived Ḥusayn from benefiting from him. If Junayd whose help Ḥusayn sought to straighten the relations did not intervene, the reason most probably was that Junayd like 'Amr did not like Ḥusayn to be involved in politics[36]. But he could not advise Ḥusayn to undo the marriage, nor did he hope that Ḥusayn would give up his interest and restrain himself if he asked him. On the other hand, he could not ask 'Amr to revise his attitude and continue to supervise Ḥusayn's progress.

Up to the time Ḥusayn left for Makkah for Umrah he had made no progress in his *sulūk*. Hujweyrī says that he left 'Amr just as he left Sahl without achieving any thing *(be-dastūrī)*[37]. Left to himself and determined to pursue the path whatever be the odds, Ḥusayn embarked on a very severe course of devotion and self-mortification. He vowed to spend a whole year in fasting, *dhikr* and prayer in the open court of the Haram, braving the scorching sun in day and chilly cold in night, taking four bites from dry bread and two swallows of water in twenty four hours. When one inflicts upon oneself such a severe discipline, against the wish of his Lord and the advice of His Prophet, he is put to test. When in the course of these penances Ḥusayn came to have visions and inspirations, instead of bowing himself to the Lord in gratitude, he thought he could produce something matching the Qur'ān, as he said to 'Amr, his teacher, when he saw him in Mecca. This indicates that he was losing balance *(maghlūb al-hāl)* under some powerful experience. Not withstanding this self-exultation, Ḥusayn was also deeply conscious of his imperfections. When after a year he returned to Baghdad, he went to Junayd and sought to join his company in order to complete his *sulūk*. Hujweyrī has this account of the meeting:

> "When Ḥusayn Ibn Manṣūr in an ecstatic condition *(ghalbah)* severed his relations with 'Amr Ibn 'Uthmān, and came to Junayd, the latter asked him: 'For what have you come?' He said: 'To join the company *(suḥbah)* of the master *(shaykh)*!' Junayd said: 'I do not take mad people *(majānīn)* in my company. For company *(suḥbah)*, sobriety is required so that you can achieve something. (Otherwise) what you did with Sahl and 'Amr may happen again". Ḥusayn said: 'Sir, sobriety *(ṣaḥw)* and intoxication *(sukr)* are the attributes of man, and continue with him so long as he is veiled from God'.[38]

Junayd objected, and said that Ḥusayn was wrong, and did not allow him in his company. Ḥusayn did not learn any lesson from it, nor was he discouraged in his pursuit. He went on all

by himself. "He would either attain something great or perish in the way"[39]. With that spirit he exerted himself to the most. He offered four hundred *rak'ah* of optional *(nafl)* prayer every day[40], woke up all night, neither slept on a bed nor reclined on a mat. When his eyes became heavy he would put his head on the knees and take a short nap. When someone asked him to take things easy, he replied: 'My Friend has not been easy with me, so that I may take rest. Has not the Prophet said: 'The men who suffer most are the Prophets, then the best among the Muslims and then the best'[41]. During Ramadan he exerted even more: he would read the whole Qur'ān in two *rak'ahs* every night, and in hundred *rak'uhs* every day[42]. To strengthen concentration, he put at times his head down and raise his legs up and say *dhikr*[43].

Husayn scorned at the easy and loved the difficult. He did not stick to any particular school of *fiqh*, and looked for the most difficult course wherever he found[44]. God has asked one to avoid the unlawful, but he loved to shun even the lawful, as much as he could[45]. A disciple, who was with him for seven years, never saw him eating seasoning except salt and vinegar[46]. For twenty years he did not change a cloak, when he removed it, it was inhabited by lice which weighed half a *danak*, 2.24 gms. It had also sheltered a scorpion who had become a friend[47]. He did not accept any presents, when he was offered a trouser he took it but gave it to others. Once he was offered two thousand dinars, he distributed the whole money among the poor and saved nothing for himself[48]. He practiced to starve for days and nights. Once after many days of starvation when he got bread and meat, he gave it to a dog saying: 'This was what my soul had desired for many days, and I had deprived her so far. But tonight she forced me to go out in search of it. Thank God, He enabled me to subdue her'[49].

Austerities such as these are not uncommon among the sufis, even though some of them are quite repugnant to the Islamic Sharī'ah. But sufis indulge in them away from the gaze of the public, complying with the Prophetic direction that *nafl*

prayers should be better done at home[50] in order to save oneself from pride. But Ḥusayn did not mind it. At the time of his first visit to Mecca, he chose to carry on his year-long fasting and prayer in the open court-yard of Ḥaram, and at the time of the second Hajj he chose the mount of Abu Qubays by the side of *al-Ṣafā* for his prayers. When Abdullah al-Maghribī, a leading sufi of Mecca went to see Husayn he found him sitting on the stone under the sun sweating profusely. He resented the practice so much that he returned without meeting him. Turning to his disciples he said: "If you live long, you would see what happens to this man. God will put him to a test which he would not be able to stand"[51]. A disciple of Junayd, al-Maghribī did not like Ḥusayn exposing himself to the heat of the sun above and stone beneath, and that too in the gaze of public eyes. This was obviously in conflict with the teaching of the Prophet.

Renunciation, poverty, devotion and *dhikr* form the first stage of the sufi *tarīqah*. The next stage is the negation of the will. At the lowest level it means to avoid engaging in things not liked by God; on a higher level, it means to purify one's obedience and devotion from every consideration, however good, other than the pleasure of God; and finally, to negate the thought that one achieves any thing by one's own will and effort, and instead consider every achievement as a sheer grace of God. Sober sufis pursue this negation of the will in a way that does not conflict with the word of God in the Qur'ān. They do not, for instance, oppose seeking the good of the Hereafter to seeking the pleasure of God, since God wants them to pursue it. Sufis overwhelmed by their experiences often put up that opposition and fail to see that the pleasure of God or His vision in Paradise is a part of the joys of Paradise God likes His servants to strive for[52].

To a question, how to reach God Ḥusayn answered: "Just take two steps, and you reach God: Throw this world on the face of those who love it, and leave the other world for those who strive for it"[53]. His attendant Ibn Fātik recounts the words

he said one night addressing God: "The breeze of love that I feel and the fragrance of Your intimacy that I enjoy makes me look down on mountains and look down on the heavens and the earth. By Yourself, if You sell me the Paradise for a moment of my time, or for an instant of my love I would not buy it. And if You raise the Hell to me with all it's torments I would counsider it less painful in comparison to the experience of Your going out of my sight... Part of the real love is that one should not love anything which is finite"[54].

Love of God in the Qur'ān and in the life and teaching of the Prophet does not exclude the love of finite beings, wife, children, friends and other human beings. In fact, it involves the love of every thing which God loves: the religion that He has ordained and the people who work for it, even though they are finite beings. Love in the Qur'ān, moreover, is as much the love of the Divine Being as it is the love of His will. The goal of the Qur'ānic love is the fulfillment of God's will, by loving Him as well as by carrying out His will. Sufi love is more concerned with the Being of God than His will; it seeks more to negate the self and unite with God rather than fulfil His will. This characteristic is much more visible in ecstatic Sufis. When they cross that stage and become sober, they attend equally to the will of God.

Ḥusayn's love shows the characteristics of a passionate love of an ecstatic. The pages of his *dīwān* eloquently speak of it. He says:

I left to the people their world and their religion
For You, O my world and my religion!
I have lit two fires within me:
One between the ribs, and
The other within the intestines.[55]

The first fire which is in the chest burns the concerns of the spirit, and the second which is in the abdomen reduces the desires of the body to ashes, leaving Ḥusayn with God alone.

You drew me so near to Yourself
That I thought You were me,
I forgot myself, and the consciousness
Of Yourself replaced my self-consciousness.[56]

That feeling intensified to such an extent that Ḥusayn neither perceived himself nor the world and perceived only God there.

You effaced my name and my form,
Then enquired about me. I said: You.
Your knowledge encompasses every thing
And whatever I see is You[57].

It is in such moments that Abū Yazīd said: 'There is none in the house but God' or 'Glory to me, how great I am! '. And it is in these moments that Ḥusayn exclaimed: 'I am the Real *(al-Ḥaqq)*'.

Ḥusayn's experience of God's union was not stable. At time he felt God near and exulted, and at times he felt Him remote and lamented. This feeling of closeness at one time and of remoteness at another continued to alternate in the early stages of his *sulūk*. Ḥusayn has expressed that in these words:

O One who is so close as to live in my heart,
And so remote as the Eternal from the contingent!
You appear to me till I think You are all, and
You draw away from me till I think You are not there.
Neither your remoteness persists, nor Your closeness benefits.
Neither Your war destroys, nor Your peace saves[58].

The sufi in this condition does not have peace. When God witnesses he cannot bear the weight of His presence, and when He hides he cannot bear the pain of His absence. This condition lasted with Ḥusayn for long. Ahmad Ibn Mardwayh who saw him in Baghdad a little before his house-arrest, reports that one day Ḥusayn started weeping in a market place and cried out:

'O people! Save me from God,' and repeated that three times. He has robbed me from my self and does not return

me to me. I cannot stand to His presence. I fear He may leave me, and I lose sight of Him and be miserable. Woe to one who loses sight of Him after He is present to him, and suffers separation after union *(waṣl)*'[59].

Ḥusayn began to think that neither his *fanā* was complete nor his *jam'* was perfect. What stood between him and his goal was he himself. Unless he was removed from between he would continue to get God at one moment and lose Him at another. Like a mad man he would go out in the market and cry out for help:

'O people of Islam! Save me. God does not leave me to my self, so that I can be at peace with my self. Nor does he take my soul from me so that I am relieved of it. This coquetry I cannot stand.'

Then he sang:

O my Holy (love)! I have embraced with the whole of my
being Your whole being.
You manifest to me till You are as if in me.
When I think of things other than You
I feel nothing but disgust.
I feel at home only in Your company.
But alas! I am in the prison of my life
deprived of Your intimacy.
Take me out, I pray, from this prison.[60]

Ḥusayn's feeling that he is the cause of his troubles intensified, and he cursed himself:

Woe to me because of me,
Wail on me, because of me.
I am the cause of all my troubles.[61]

He insistently prayed God to annihilate him:

Between me and You there is myself
that keeps me away.
Remove it from between, and replace
it by Yours.[62]

It was at this time that charges were leveled against him from different quarters. He felt that what he was saying or doing was in conflict with Islam as people know it, and hence they were quite justified to condemn him. If they killed him, they would be doing something which was right from their view point. But this was also what he himself was looking for, in order to achieve complete and abiding union with God. Consequently, one evening in a state of rapture, he cried out in the market of Baghdad:

Go, tell my friends: I have set sail
On the sea, and my raft has broken.
It is in the religion of the cross that I will die.
I will go neither to Batha nor to Madinah.

Then he came home, recited *al-Fātiḥah*, *al-Shu'rā'* and the succeeding *surāhs* till he reached this verse of surah *al-Rūm*, "Those who are given knowledge and faith would say..." (30:56). He repeated the verse times and times again and wept. When he finished the prayer *(ṣalāh)*, his attendant Ḥusayn Ibn Hamdān said: "Sir, in the market You said words of infidelity *(kufr)*, and here in prayer You raise hue and cry. What do You want?" Ḥusayn said: "I want this (pointing to himself), curse be on it, to be killed". Ibn Hamdan said: 'Is it right, Sir, to incite people to something wrong?' He said: 'Certainly not. But I incite them to something right. For me to kill it is a duty, and if they do it for the sake of their religion, they would be rewarded"[63].

These words are not sarcastic. Ḥusayn is quite serious. If suicide had been allowed in Islam Ḥusayn would have killed himself, by dropping himself from a mount or jumping into a river, as mystics in other traditions have done. That would have enabled the drop mingle with the ocean, and the lover unite with the Beloved. Ḥusayn elaborates the point himself in these verses:

O righteous people! Kill me
For I shall live by dying,
My life is in my death,

And my death is in my life.
To me the effacement of my being
Is the noblest of all the acts,
And my persistence with (human) qualities
Is the greatest of all the evils.[64]

Ḥusayn was passing through this condition when he was put in prison. He stayed there for nine years. It appears that he gradually overcame his restlessness and agony, attained the permanent union he was craving for. Many of his verses refer to this condition. For instance:

I saw the Lord with the eyes of my heart
I said: 'Who are You?' He replied: You.[65]

Or

Your soul has blended with my soul,
As wine mixes with distilled water,
What happens to You happens to me,
Hence You are me all the time.[66]

Union is the highest stage which Ḥusayn reached in his mystical journey. He did not go beyond and attain the stage of post-union separation *(farq ba'd al-jam')*, as Abū Yazīd and Shiblī who were no less ecstatic eventually attained[67]. There is no indication of this stage in Ḥusayn's reported experiences, nor is there anything in his writings to suggest it. His words show that he was aware of only three stages of the spiritual journey: difference, union, and complete extinction. He says:

There is contraction, then expansion and finally extinction
Or there is difference, then union and finally obliteration[68].

At another place, he describes these stages more clearly:

The gnostic passes through three stages:
At the first, the heart is robbed of its self-identity.
Then it passes through an overpowering ecstasy.
Finally, the lofty powers of the heart are subjected
To a vision that completely wipes out the seer.[69]

The third stage which Ḥusayn calls complete obliteration of the seer is what other Sufis call *jam' al-jam'*, union of union or absolute union where all distinctions between the seer and God are wiped out from the consciousness of the mystic. Ḥusayn has elsewhere called it *'ayn al-jam'*, union pure and complete. It is this state of *'ayn al-jam'* which Ḥusayn finally attained. Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1034/1624) has observed in one of his letters that Ḥusayn lived in this state and died in it[70].

The stage of union as noted earlier is characterized by a set of attitudes and ideas which are quite different from the ones which characterize the stage of second separation *(farq thānī)*. For various reasons, these characteristics are more pronounced in some Sufis than in others. In case of Ḥusayn they are found in their extreme form.

Unitive experience, first of all, is an ecstatic experience *(wajd)*, and sufis live under its intoxicating influence for years unless they are taken beyond that stage. Ḥusayn persisted in that state till the end of his life and hardly moved beyond it. Till the end he continued to speak of *wajd* and *sukr* and sang of its praises: For example:

> One who is intoxicated by the lights of the unitive experience (*al-tawḥīd*) is veiled from speaking about His isolation (from the world), and one who is intoxicated by the lights of pure devotion to Him speaks of the reality of union; for it is the intoxicated one who speaks of every mystery.[71]

Or

> When the mystic attains perfection in love,
> And forgets union with the Beloved because of intoxication,
> He has true experience whereas he only perceived his desires before.
> For lovers offer prayer in the state of union (*kufr*)[72].

That Ḥusayn always lived in the state of ecstasy and intoxication, and did not move beyond it is attested by the last words he said on the gibbet: "All that matters for an ecstatic is that he devotes to the One exclusively" *(ḥasb al-wājid ifrād al-Wāḥid lahū)*[73].

Under the influence of the unitive experience ecstatic Sufis very often indulge in *shaṭḥ*. They identify themselves with God or with any of His attributes, acts or privileges. We have noted the *shaṭḥāt* of Abū Yazīd in the previous chapter. Here are some of Ḥusayn's. He said:

O the inmost of my inmost!
You are not other than me.
Hence my apologies are not to anyone but to me[74].

Or

My 'One' has made me one with the truth of unity.
There is no other way to Him at all.
I am the Real,
And the Real appears truly in the Real
Concealing His Essence,
Where there is no difference.[75]

Ecstatic Sufis often make high claims. A small provocation, even a petty achievement may excite them to fantastic claims. Once God cured a sick man at the hands of Ḥusayn. This spurred him to say: "Had God not said: 'I would fill the hell with a lot of jinn and men', I would spit at the Fire (of Hell) and turn it into a garden for its inhabitants"[76]. Turning at another time to the people in a mosque he said: "If a particle of what is there in my heart were dropped on the mountains of the earth, they would melt away. If I were put into Hell at the Day of Judgment its fire would burn out; and if I entered Paradise it would be razed to the ground". After that he began to sing:

I wonder how a part of my body holds my whole being
Whereas the earth cracks under the weight of a part of mine.
Could the broad expanse of the earth be enough to hold me.

I would be unhappy over such an expansion[77].

No wonder if in this state Ḥusayn wrote a letter to a man, probably a disciple at Dinawer which began with these words: 'From the All-Gracious and the All-Merciful *(al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm)* to so and so...". When the letter was discovered by the police and presented to Ḥusayn, he admitted that it was written by him. When they scolded him saying: "Earlier you claimed prophecy. Now you are claiming Lordship *(rubūbīyah)*?" Ḥusayn denied the charge and said: 'I don't claim Lordship. This is the state of *'ayn al-jam'*, pure union in our way. Is there any Actor other than God? I and my hands are only instruments in His hand!"[78]

Sufis in the state of *'ayn al-jam'* are expected to keep silent and avoid making high claims. Indulgence in *shaṭḥ* and high claims is regarded as a sign of weakness and immaturity. Once when Shiblī was passing through that state and indulged in *shaṭḥ* Junayd reprimanded him, and he learned the lesson[79]. But Ḥusayn was not the man who would listen to anyone. Shiblī referred to the difference in their attitudes when he said: "I and Ḥusayn Ibn Manṣūr were one; the difference between us was that he proclaimed it, and I concealed it"[80]. When Ḥusayn was put on the cross he addressed him and said: "Did I not forbid you from speaking of it in public"[81].

Miracles happen at the hands of saints. No theologian has denied that except some Mu'tazilah. The common view among the sufis is that miracles happen more at the hands of the ecstatic and the enraptured than the sober sufis. In fact, sober sufis deliberately abstain from working miracles. For, first of all, miracles are not the sign of *walāyah*, a sufi may be a *walī*, even if he works no miracles[82]. On the other hand, even a non-believer may work miracles. False prophets like Musaylamah and Aswad al-Ansī[83] had in the past worked miracles, and the Anti-Christ *(Dajjāl)* will work great miracles in his time. He will even kill a person and raise the dead[84]. Secondly, miracles are not at all the measure of a walī's greatness; on the contrary, the real measure is how he submits to the will of God, and

obeys the *Sharī'ah*. Abū Yazīd said: "If a man spreads his prayer-mat on water, and sits cross-legged in the air, don't be deceived, till you ascertain how he does with the injunctions (of the *Shar'*)[85].

Thirdly, since miracles may produce a sense of pride or self-conceit or at least a sense of satisfaction and elation in the sufi, and may lead credulous people to wrong beliefs about him, great sufis have discouraged the working of miracles in public and made their hiding obligatory[86]. Abū yazīd said: "God showed signs and wonders at my hand in the beginning, but I did not attach to them any importance. When He saw that, He opened the door for gnosis to me"[87]. It is said that Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Nūrī once asked a fisherman to throw his fishing net in the water saying that if he were a *walī* the fisherman would catch a huge fish weighing three *raṭls* (four and a half kilograms). The fisherman threw the net and did catch a fish of that weight. When this was reported to Junayd he said: 'I wish the fisherman would have caught a snake instead, and Nūrī would have been proven wrong'[88]. Finally, Sufis are not supposed to attribute to themselves the miracles that happen at their hands; for it is not they who work them, but it is God who works at their hands. They have no power in them-selves to bring any thing into being. If they claim it for themselves they claim participation in Lordship, which is wrong and unjustified. Even Jesus when he cured the liper or restored sight to the blind, and raised the dead to life would do that in the name of God[89], and would not attribute anything to himself. Prophets are sober not ecstatic.

Ḥusayn has been reported to have worked a number of miracles. Some have doubted their reality and regarded them mere jugglery. These people either denied the possibility of miracle altogether, or for some reason or other, were opposed to Ḥusayn. Sufis, whatever their view of Ḥusayn, do not deny his miracles. But whether all the miracles which have been reported of him were real miracles, or simply trickery is a question about which some sufis, even the ones very close to

him had their doubts. Abū Ya'qūb Isḥāq Ibn Muḥammad Nahrjūrī, a close friend of Ḥusayn doubted the reality of some of them[90]. Ḥusayn's father-in-law, Abū Ya'qūb al-Aqṭa' is reported to have been disillusioned from him and called him a trickster and magic-monger[91]. Ibn 'Aṭā, who loved Ḥusayn and lost his life on his account did not rule out the possibility of Ḥusayn making pact with jinns[92]. A number of writers have attributed magic, alchemy, exorcism and sorcery to Ḥusayn and mentioned many instances[93]. Part of the purpose of his journey to India is said to have been learning magic[94]. Hujweyrī has denied these charges on the ground that it is not consistent with Ḥusayn's prayers, devotions and *walāyah*[95].

What Sufis mostly objected was Ḥusayn's free indulgence in miracles. This had its wrong and highly reprehensible effects on many credulous people. Some of whom feared him a lot. Some even deified him. They believed that God had entered in him and that he had power to raise the dead[96]. They worshipped him, sought *barakah* from his things, even considered his excretion to be pure, and drank his urine[97]. They did not believe that he was executed, and looked for his return after forty days[98], as early Christians are said to have looked for the return of Jesus after his claimed crucification. This belief persisted in some Hallajians at least for one and a half-century as Abū l-'Alā al-Mu'arrī (d. 449/11057) has mentioned[99].

What is most shocking is that Ḥusayn is never reported to have condemned these beliefs and practices. On the contrary, he appears to have given a fillip to them by such practices as writing to his disciples in the name of 'the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful', as noted before, and justifying the behaviour, when questioned, on the basis of the unitive experience *('ayn al-jam')*. As usual, one might try to excuse Ḥusayn on the ground of ecstasy and intoxication. However, it seems that he was not very much convinced of this move. He appears to feel that he deserved to be hanged as he failed to attribute his miracles and other favours to God. It is reported

that once he heard a *jinn* reading the Qur'ān ecstasy overtook him. He started dancing, raising his legs from the ground, and sang:

"If one to whom some secret is revealed
Goes on to disclose it
They don't trust him with regard to secrets
So long as he lives.
They punish him of his lapse
And desert him rather than love him[100].

His friend and disciple, Aḥmad b. Fātik saw the Lord in dream as if he was standing before Him, and said: "Lord! What did Ḥusayn do to suffer such a misfortune?" He said: "I revealed to him something sublime *(ma'na)*, but he called people to himself. So I inflicted on him what you have seen[101]. Ibrāhīm Ibn Shaybān (d. 330/941) whom Qushayrī calls the leading mystic of his time said: "Don't indulge in claims. If you want to see where claims lead, look at Ḥallāj and what happened to him"[102].

Massignon has observed that Ḥusayn put his miracles as a proof for the truth of the ideas he was expounding. But he has not cited any statement of Ḥusayn in support[103]. What is true is that his miracles did boost his popularity and won him many followers, inspite of the fact that most Sufis of his time opposed him or disowned him[104].

One major reason why Sufis extol ecstasy is that in their view ecstatic experience reveals reality and uncovers mysteries. Ḥusayn said: "The mystic who is thrown into ecstasy by the effulgence of isolation *(tajrīd)* speaks of the reality of *tawḥīd*. None but the ecstatic talks of all the hidden truths[105]. He seems to believe that whatever he perceived was true and certain and needed no checking with the Prophetic Revelation. "When one reaches the stage of gnosis *(ma'rifah)*", he said: "God makes revelation to his heart and protects his inmost *(al-sirr)* against wrong ideas"[106]. Did Ḥusayn rule out the possibility of error or of satanic insinuation in mystical inspirations? It is difficult to ascertain from the material at our

hand. Sufis who go beyond the stage of pure union *('ayn al-jam')* affirm the reality of difference along with unity, and those who reach the end of the road affirm absolute otherness of God and His complete transcendence. In general, Sufis admit the possibility of error in mystical inspirations and insist on a confirmation from the Prophetic Revelation as Qushayrī says: "Inspired ideas are true only if they agree with the truths of revealed knowledge *('ilm)*[107].

As said in the introduction there are three different views among the Sufis regarding the goal of Sufism. For some Sufis the goal is union with God, or an ecstatic realization of oneness (*tawḥīd*, or more precisely *tawḥīd ḥālī*). For the more intellectual among them it is the intuitive knowledge of reality or gnosis *(ma'rifah)* revealed in the unitive experience, *kashf* and vision. For a third group of Sufis the goal is sincere and absolute obedience to God; for them the unitive experience is a station of the mystical path, a means necessary for the realization of one's servant-hood *('ubūdīyah)*.

For Ḥusayn, as one can expect from him, the goal of Sufism is the experience of union or *tawḥīd*, unification, as he calls it; at times, however, he stresses upon the knowledge *(ma'rifah)* that this experience reveals. The advice that he gave to his son regarding the goal of Sufism was: "People strive for works *(a'māl)*; but you must strive for that of which one particle is better than all the words of men and jinn, and which is nothing other than the knowledge of reality *('ilm al-ḥaqīqah)*"[108]. All renunciation, devotion, love and self-annihilation is for the purpose of gnosis. In a couplet he expresses the idea in this way:

Oh my soul! Have patience,
Honour is in asceticism and renunciation.
But you must rise to that height
Whence comes revelation and illumination[109].

For Sufis who believe that the goal of Sufism is the attainment of union with God or the knowledge revealed in that experience, obedience to the Sharī'ah is only a preparation for the realization of that end. Though this preparation is necessary, and without it the attainment of the goal is inconceivable, the fact that the end is not a part of the Sharī'ah and is realized in and through mystical experience of *fanā* and *jam'* often gives rise to the idea that Sharī'ah is nothing but a means, a form without reality. This is exactly the position which Ḥusayn states in these words:

> "As for the inner reality of Truth, its outer form is the *Sharī'ah*. Whoever is perfect in the form of the *Sharī'ah* to him its inner reality is revealed and its inner reality is the gnosis of God"[110].

To a disciple Ḥusayn explained the point further:

"Know that one treads on the ground of the Sharī'ah until one enters the stages of union with God *(mawāqif al-tawḥīd)*. When one reaches there, for him (obligation to) the *Sharī'ah* drops. He perceives flashes *(lawā'ih)* (of reality) emerging from the depth of true experience *(ma'dan al-ṣidq)*. When these flashes recur and glimpses *(tawāli')* multiply the pronouncement of *tawḥīd*, God's unity, becomes to him blasphemy and the Sharī'ah a folly *(hawas)*. He is at that stage eradicated root and branch. Now if he observes the Sharī'ah he does so as a habit (*rasm*) and if he speaks of *tawḥīd* he speaks of it under an overwhelming ecstasy."[111]

If oneness with God *(tawḥīd)* is the ultimate reality and the true faith *('īmān)*, the Sharī'ah which presumes the otherness of God and the duality of the Creator and the creation would be infidelity *(kufr)*. On the other hand, if duality is the truth and God's transcendence is the true faith *('īmān)*, then the experience of oneness with God is infidelity *(kufr)*. Ḥusayn adopts the first terminology in exhorting a disciple to the experience of union:

> "May God hide from you the outer form of Sharī'ah and disclose to you the reality of *kufr* (i.e. oneness with God), for the outer form of Sharī'ah is concealed infidelity *(kufr khafī)* and the reality of *kufr* is the manifest gnosis *(ma'rifah jalīyah)*[112].

He mixes up both the terminologies in this puzzling way:

> Whoever differentiates between *kufr* (infidelity) and *imān* (faith) commits *kufr*. On the other hand, whoever does not differentiate between *kāfir* (infidel) and *mu'min* (faithful) he, too, is guilty of *kufr* (infidelity)[113].

What this statement means is this: The true reality of faith as revealed in mystic experience is oneness with God. Seeing in the light of this experience everything is one with God, hence, the distinction that the *Sharī'ah* makes between faith and unfaith is blasphemy (*kufr*). However, from the point of view of the Sharī'ah which one has to follow so far as life in society is concerned, not to differentiate between a rejector *(kāfir)* of the Shari'ah and its sincere adherent *(mu'min)* is also infidelity.

Later sufi terminology made the problem of comprehension easy by calling *kufr* in the sense of the experience of oneness with God *kufr-i-ṭarīqah*, the *kufr* of the mystic way. By contrast, it called the experience of difference after union *Islām-i-ṭarīqah*, the Islam of the mystic way[114]. Ḥusayn uses *kufr* in the following couplet in the sense of *kufr-i-ṭarīqah.*

> I denied *(kafartū)* the religion of God and I must deny
> Even though it is abhorrent to the Muslims[115].

The root meaning of *kufr* is to hide. The denial of God is called *kufr* because it means concealing the great truth of God's existence which is inherent in man. The experience of oneness with God is called *kufr* of *ṭarīqah* because it conceals the truth that God is other than and different from the world, as one has in Islam.

Sufis under the intoxication of the unitive experience see only the will of God operating in the world. They negate the will of man as they negate all natural causes. We have already mentioned the words of Ḥusayn that he said justifying his writing to disciples in the name of the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful. "This is the state", he said, "of *'ayn al-jam'*. Is there any Actor other than God? I and my hands are only an instrument in His hand"[116].

If the truth is that God's will is the only will there, and He is the only actor then all that happens in the world is good and right; for everything is done by God. There cannot therefore be any difference between Islam and *kufr*, between *tawḥīd* and *shirk*, faith and unfaith, *mu'min* and *kāfir*. One can now see why an ecstatic mystic does not affirm the reality of human will or the reality of good and evil, truth and untruth, faith and unfaith, *tawḥīd* and *shirk*, Islam and *kufr*. For him all religions are one. Ḥusayn taught this 'sublime truth' to a disciple in this way:

> "My son! All religions are of God the Most High. To each group of mankind He has assigned its religion. They have not chosen their religion for themselves; He has chosen it for them. So if one reproaches a person that he has a wrong faith one in fact assumes that he has chosen it of himself. This is the way of the free-willers *(al-Qadarīyah)*, and the Qadarīyah are the Zoroastrians of this Ummah. Know that Judaism, Christianity, Islam and all other religions are so many titles and names. The goal of all of them is one and the same".

Then he recited these lines:

> I pondered deeply over all the religions
> I found that they emerge from one truth
> Which appears in different forms
> Don't expect from everyone the same religion
> This will bar him from reaching the truth.
> The truth which has been given to him
> Exhorts him to all truths and all virtues

And he understands them all[117].

On the same logic, the claim of Pharaoh that 'he is the Great lord', and the claim of Moses that 'there is no lord other than Allah' both are equally right. One night Ḥusayn camped along with a group of his followers at the mosque of Dinawar. A person from the group asked Ḥusayn: 'What do you say about the claim of the Pharaoh?' He said: 'That is right'. The man then asked: 'What do you say about the call of Moses?' He replied: 'That is also right. Both the words are true in post-eternity as they are true in pre-eternity'[118]. All that is thought, said or done in this world happens according to what God has determined in pre-eternity. Hence, according to Ḥusayn all beliefs, ideas and actions, however contradictory they may appear to us are right in reality for ever and ever.

Having arrived at this 'ultimate truth' it is quite natural for Ḥusayn to regard Iblis' non-submission to God's command a submission to His eternal decree. In fact Iblis obeyed God by disobeying Him, and upheld the oneness of Lordship *(tawḥīd)*, by refusing to comply with His command[119]. In Ḥusayn's view Iblis knew whereas God did not know how he should glorify Him.

Ecstatic sufis like Ḥusayn fail to distinguish between the existential will *(mashī'ah)* of God and His prescriptive will *('amr)*, and put the one against the other. They similarly fail to see the relation between the outer form of God's *Sharī'ah* and its inner reality. Ḥusayn tries to dissociate the internal states of the heart from external actions of the body, the inner graces of God from outer rituals, and seeks the one without the other. He tries to reduce religion merely to a matter of the heart, a matter of intention and feeling, ignoring its active and social dimension. This is what he did when he treated a part of the house he built as Ka'ba, made circumambulation (*ṭawāf*) of it, performed the standing (*wuqūf*) of Arafah on its premises, and preached to people that if anyone did sincerely at his own house just as he did, he would have the pleasure of God along with all the graces as the one who performs Ḥajj at Makkah.

Ḥusayn not only committed this blasphemy (*zandaqah*) and similar others, he demonstrated through his action that he assumed the powers of the *Shāri'*, the law-giver which was not given to him. Not a few sufis have in the state of intoxication declared that their *walāyah* is higher than the *walāyah* of the Prophet, or that they have been graced with powers greater than those of him. But even they have not thought of superseding his legislative authority[120]. It was the maddening ecstasy of Ḥusayn that took him to that far.

It is not unexpected from such an intoxicated sufi to celebrate the Id by mourning in black clothes, in face of the Prophet's instruction to celebrate Id rejoicing in happy dresses, under the feeling that his works might be rejected by God as unworthy of Him[121]. One cannot but appreciate the humility and the feeling of contrition behind this action; on the other hand, one cannot but censure this a-social and non-religious behaviour. The life of an ecstatic is full of such contradictory stances: humility and arrogance, submission and revolt, self-negation and self-deification.

Ideas on Reality

Some sufis like Abū Yazīd described their experiences; they did not speculate on the nature of reality. Some like Junayd expounded a few doctrines without going into allied issues. Some like Ibn 'Arabī worked out a whole philosophy. Ḥusayn could not develop any coherent doctrine. We have in him three different stances which he could not weave together. There is first, the stance of absolute transcendentalism which negates the possibility of any real union with God. The second stance is pantheistic which asserts the essential oneness of God and the world and treats their differences as relative. The third stance which is open to different interpretations is that God enters the human form and gives it a semi-divine status.

The transcendental stance comes out in the passage on *tawḥīd* which Qushayrī quotes from Ḥusayn in the beginning of his *Risālah*:

"Believe everything to be contingent; for eternity belongs to Him alone. What exists in a body has to have accidents; what is assembled with instruments is sustained by its forces; what a moment of time integrates another moment disintegrates; what subsists by an other is prey to necessities; what is caught in imagination is comprehended through concepts; what is in space can be located at a place; what belongs to a specie its nature can be known through enquiry.

But God, exalted is He! No 'above' hangs over Him; no 'under' supports Him; no 'limitation' confronts Him; no 'near to' faces Him; no 'behind' pursues Him; no 'front' limits Him; no 'before' makes Him appear; no 'after' terminates Him; no 'whole' unifies Him; no 'becoming' brings Him into being; and no 'non-being' makes Him disappear.

His discretion is not His attribute. His action has no cause, and His being has no boundaries. All that characterizes His creation He is above that, and nothing of it is found in Him. His actions are done without any effort. He is different from the objects of the world in His eternity as they are different from Him in their contingency.

If you ask about Him 'when?', His being precedes time; if you call Him *Huwa* (He) this h and w are His creation; if you ask 'where', He was before space.

Words are nothing but signs for Him; His existence is its own proof. To know Him is to believe that He is one, and to affirm His unity is to distinguish Him from His creation. Whatever reason conceives He is above that. How can something enter Him which originates from Him; how can something return to Him which is brought into being by Him.

> Eyes see Him not, imagination catches Him not. His coming near is His favour; His going remote is His disfavour. He ascends without going up, and descends without moving down. He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden, the Near and the Distant. There is nothing like unto Him; he is all-Hearing, All-Seeing[122].

Ḥusayn stated the same thing in short as follows:

> God is a unique being (*dhāt wāhid*) existing by Himself, different from everything in His eternity, separate from all in His Lordship. Nothing mingles with Him, nor anything mixes with Him. Space does not surround Him, time does not contain Him, reason does not comprehend Him, thought does not conceive Him, contemplation does not penetrate Him, and weariness does not overtake Him[123].

He ruled out that any object of the world may partake of the essence or the attributes of God:

> God appears through every body and every form, but He does that without touching them or mingling with them[124].

He stated it even more clearly:

> One who thinks that Divinity mingles with humanity or humanity mingles with Divinity, he is certainly an infidel. For God *in His essence and attributes is unique and different from the essence and attributes of the objects of the world.* He does not resemble them in any sense, nor do they resemble Him in anything. How can there be a resemblance *(shibh)* between the Eternal and the contingent![125]

This statement makes a sharp distinction between God and the world on the pattern of Junayd and rules out the possibility of God entering into or mingling with man or man mingling with Him or uniting with Him in any real sense. It also rules out the possibility of man being transformed in any sense into a divine or semi-divine being. For God is absolutely unique and different from everything else both in His essence and

attributes. Ḥusayn presents here the Eternal and the contingent as two exclusive categories which have nothing common in them.

About his experience of union with God Ḥusayn clarifies:

> My humanity vanishes in Your Divinity without mingling with it, and Your Divinity dominates over my humanity without touching it[126].

Hence the union of Ḥusayn with God is neither a fusion of God's divinity with Ḥusayn's humanity nor the assimilation of Ḥusayn's humanity into God's divinity. This passage unequivocally rejects the possibility of God's entering into man, His indwelling, incarnation, infusion or essential union, whatever word one may like to use.

What Ḥusayn says about his union he says about the union of every other sufi:

> "Humanity does not leave him (man), nor does it unite with Him (God)[127].

In line with this view Ḥusayn explains *tawḥīd,* asserting God's unity in this way:

> *Tawḥīd* is to distinguish the contingent from the Eternal, and then turn away from the contingent and concentrate on the Eternal. This is, however, the husk of *tawḥīd*; the real *tawḥīd* is to die *(fanā)* to the contingent and live by *(baqā)* the Eternal[125].

Obviously if the second sentence is not to contradict the first, the only proper way to interpret *fanā* and *baqā* and the experience of *tawḥīd* is on *shuhūdī* lines, that is to say that the experience is only a matter of vision, not of reality.

The pantheistic stance comes out in passages which say that God alone exists, that nothing exists beside Him, and that the objects of the world are manifestations of God proceeding from Him yet not different from Him. In the following passage Ḥusayn explains the idea through the example of a point and

the lines which are formed by the movement of the point and are not different from it:

> "The point is the origin of every line, and the entire line is points joined together. The line cannot do without the point, nor the point without the line. Every line, straight or crooked, is formed by the movement of the point, and all that one sees is a point between two points. This may indicate how God appears *(tajallā)* in everything that is seen, and is visible in all that eyes fall upon. That is why I say I do not see a thing but see God in it"[129].

The idea that God alone exists, and that nothing exists besides God comes out also from this anecdote. Someone asked Ḥusayn: "What is the way that leads to God?" Ḥusayn said: "You have a road between two things. But there is none there beside God". The questioner could not grasp Ḥusayn's point and begged for elaboration. Ḥusayn said: "He who does not understand our allusions cannot benefit from our elaborations". Then he sang:

> 'Is it You' or 'is it I'? This would be (true) in case
> of two gods.
> Avoid, therefore, saying: Two beings.
> Your existence is in my non-existence
> My whole is a fraud against all in two respects.
> Where is Your being other than me that I can see you?
> It is clear that my self is beyond space.
> How can be Your Face an object to be seen
> By eyes of the heart or the eyes of the head!
> Between me and You there is my ego that obstructs
> Take away my self, I beseech, from between, through
> Your Self[130].

In these lines Ḥusayn makes three major points: One that there is only one being there, God. Second, that Ḥusayn does not exist as a separate being in himself. He is eternally non-existent and his existence is an illusion. Third, that his real self is above space and one with God. But what obstructs the realization of this truth is his false ego which he entreats God

to remove away from between them. That his real self is one with God, Ḥusayn states in different places. For example:

I do not play with affirming the unity (*tawḥīd*)
Though I sometimes forget it.
But how can I forget it, or play with it.
It is true that I am He[131].

Ḥusayn affirms not only that he is one with God, he also affirms that everything is one with Him:

In existence there who is man, who is Iblis!
Who is the throne of Solomon, who is Bilqis!
Everything is a symbol, and to You it refers,
O You that attracts the hearts like a magnet[132].

Aḥmad b. Fātik related that he heard Ḥusayn saying:

"I am the Real, and the Real
Is truly in the real.
Hiding His self, and there is
No difference between the two[134].

However, the way Ḥusayn understood this essential unity does not completely identify the world with God. To be sure, the world is essentially one with God, yet God is more than the world. When people asked Ḥusayn how was his saying (I am the Real) consistent with his prayer and worship, he said: "I know my own worth?"[135].

The third stance that God enters into a human form and transforms it into a semi-divine being appears in the following verse:

Exalted is he whose humanity *(nāsūt)* revealed
The mystery of the shining light of His divinity *(lāhūt)*
Then He appeared externally in His creation
In the form of one who eats and drinks
Till His creation saw Him
Just as one eyebrow feels the other eyebrow[136].

That this human form is that of Ḥusayn is stated in a number of verses such as:

Your soul is mingled with my soul
As wine is mixed with distilled water
Now, if anything touches You it touches me
So You are me all the time[137].

And

I am the One I love, and the One I love is me.
We are two souls that occupy one body.
So when you see me you see Him,
And when you see Him you see us[138].

And

You move between the pericardium and the heart
Just as tears run from the eyelids
You enter the inmost part of the heart
Just as souls enter the bodies[139].

On the basis of these and similar verses it has been understood that Ḥusayn was an incarnationist (*ḥulūlī*). That he believed that God had entered in him. A number of things may be cited in support of this view: One that this is the apparent meaning *(al-ẓāhir)* of these verses. Anyone who will hear them will interpret them on *ḥulūlī* lines. To cite an instance, when Ibn Khafif, an admirer of Ḥusayn, heard the first verses and did not know that they were said by Ḥusayn he cursed their author. But when he was told that they were composed by Ḥusayn he qualified his remark and said: 'If that really is his belief he is an infidel... But perhaps the lines are falsely ascribed to him'[140]. Ḥusayn's words, 'I am the Real' may also be cited in support; they readily lend themselves to a *ḥulūlī* interpretation. One can also point to the fact that Ḥusayn wrote letters in the name of God, that his disciples bowed to him and worshipped him, and that when he worked miracles he hardly attributed them to God.

Hujwerī denies that Ḥusayn could have believed in *ḥulūl*, incarnation or infusion, and ascribes the doctrine to a later sufi sect who claimed to follow Ḥusayn and called themselves Ḥallājiyah[141]. But he does not discuss the issue in his book. May be he had discussed it in the tract which he wrote in defense of Ḥusayn. Sufis in general follow the line of Hujwerī, and take Ḥusayn's above verses as ecstatic utterances of a sufi overpowered by his experiences.

All the three stances are present in Ḥusayn's writings. There is no visible effort on his part to weave them in a single doctrine.

Notes and References

1. Professor Massignon's *La Passion de l-Ḥallāj* was first published in 1922; later it was revised and enlarged. Its English translation, *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj* by Herbert Mason in four volumes is from the French edition of 1975, and was published from Princeton University Press, New Jersey in 1982. It will be referred henceforward simply as *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*.
2. See George Anawati et Luis Gardet, *Mystique Musalmane*, 2nd ed. Paris, 1968, ch.2
3. The words of Shaykh Aḥmad Rifā'ī are: "In my opinion he (Ḥusayn) was not a sage; in my opinion he neither imbibed nor perceived anything. I believe that he heard only a murmuring, a tinkling, and that his imagination then carried him away from state to state" (quotation from *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, vol.II, p.177)
4. Qushayrī quotes Ḥusayn's words at various places in his *al-Risālah* opt. cit. (see pp. 32, 374, 483, 484, 494, 551, 604, 617, 636) This only implies a tacit approval of his words on subjects they refer to. As for Ḥusayn's mystical journey *(sulūk)*, *ṭarīqah*, achievements and ideas, Qushayrī abstains from any comments. He does not include him among the leaders *(mashā'ikh)* of Sufism whom he mentions in the first pages of his book.
5. For Jilānī's words see *infra* p.
6. See Sayyed Muḥammad Mubārak 'Alwī Kirmānī, alias Amīr Khurd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, Urdu trans by I'jaz al-Ḥaqq Quddusī, Lahore, 1980, p.515. The words of Shaykh Niẓāmuddin Awliya are: "He (Ḥusayn) is to be rejected *(mardūd)*. Junayd was the leader of sufis in his time, and he rejected him, and his rejection is to be taken as the rejection of Ḥusayn by all the *mashā'ikh*."
7. This is the estimate of Abdullah b. Khafif, the sufi Shaykh from Shiraz. See al-Yāfi'ī, *Mir'at al-Jinān*, Beirut, Vol.II. p.254

8. These are the words of Abū l-Qāsim ībrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Naṣrābādī (d.369). See al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-'Arabī, n.d. Vol.VIII, p.121
9. See chapters 2 and 3 in my *Sufism and Sharī'ah: A study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's Effort to Reform Sufism*, Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 1986.
10. Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, opt. cit. Vol.III, pp. 112, 121
11. *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, Vol. I p. 64; the article on al-Ḥallāj in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (new.ed.)
12. Massignon attributes Amr's unhappiness with Ḥusayn's marriage to his spiritual jealousy, (*The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, Vol. I p.22). This is part of his effort to play up the image of Ḥusayn and bring down the image of his fellow sufis even teachers including Sahl, 'Amr and Junayd.
13. *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, Vol.I, p.23
14. Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, p.118, *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, ed. L. Massignon & Paul Karaus, Paris, 1936, p.43
15. Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, p.121
16. Hujwerī, 'Ali b. `Uthmān, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, opt. cit. p.235.
17. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa l-Nihāyah* (Beirut, n.d.) Vol XI, p.135; Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, p.113
18. *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, Vol.I, p.24; al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol.VIII, p.113
19. *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, Vol.I, p.24
20. Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, p.113; Abu l-Fidā, *al-Mukhtaṣar fī Tārīkh al-Bashar*, Vol.I, p.89, Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt A'yān*, ed. Dr. Iḥsān 'Abbās, Beirut, Dar al-Thaqafah, 1969, Vol.II, p.141.
21. Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, p.113; *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, Vol.I, p.117
22. *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, Vol.I, pp.82 ff.
23. Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, p.120
24. Ibid, Vol.III, pp.113-114

25. *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, vol.I, p.222. Actually Ḥusayn prays for greater infidelity which, as we will explain (see *infra*), means the experience of union and identity.
26. *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, Vol.I, p.28; Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, p.114
27. *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, Vol,I. p.29
28. Ibid, p.30
29. Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, p.138, Ibn Kathīr *al-Bidāyah wa l-Nihāyah*, opt. cit. Vol,XI, p.141; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī Tārīkh al-Mulūk wa al-Umām*, Hyderabad 1359 A.H., Vol.VI, p.163; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, Vol.II, p.143; *Tārīkh Abī l-Fidā*, Vol.I, p.89
30. Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mizān*, Hyderabad, 1330 A.H. Fascimile ed. Beirut, 1390/1971 Vol.II, p.315
31. Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Muḥjūb*, opt. cit. p.192
32. Al-Yafi'ī, *Mi'rat al-Jinān*, Vol.II, p.254; see also al-Khifājīs commentary *Nasīm al-Riyāḍ* on *Kitāb al-Shifā*, of Qādī 'Ayāḍ, Madinah, Maktabah Salfīyah, p.538
33. Hujwerī, *Kashf al-Muḥjūb*, p.190
34. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, opt. cit. p.92
35. Ibid, p.132
36. See *infra*, p.
37. Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Muḥjūb*, p.190
38. Ibid, p.235
39. Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, p117; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa l-Nihāyah*, Vol.XI, p.134; Yāfi'ī, *Mir'at al-Jinān*, Vol.II, p.258
40. Hujwerī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, p.39
41. Kalābādhī, *al-Ta'arruf li Madhhab ahl al-Taṣawwuf*, opt. cit. p.85
42. *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, p.46
43. Ibid, p.14
44. Ibid, p.19
45. *Diwān al-Ḥallāj*, ed. Luis Massignon, Paris, Librarie Orientaliste, 1955, p.80
46. *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, p.45

47. Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, p.118; 'Aṭṭār, Farīd al-Dīn, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, opt. cit. Vol.II, p.117
48. *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, p.42
49. Ibid, p.98
50. Supererogatory works of different kinds have been preferred to be performed in private or at home. For instance: "If you disclose charity, even so it is well; but if you conceal it and make it reach those in need that is best for you (Qur'ān: 2:271), "Call on your lord with humility and in private" (7:55). About the *dhikr* of God, the Prophet has said: "The best *dhikr* is one that is done in low voice" (*Musnad Ahmad*: Vol.I, p.173, 180, 187). He has also liked that one should do the supererogatory prayers (*ṣalāt*) at home.
51. Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, p.119; *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, p.104
52. Aḥmad Sirhindī, *Maktūbāt Imām Rabbānī* (ed. Nūr Muḥammad, Lahore 1304/1964) Vol.I, Letter 302 pp.799-800.
53. *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, p.107
54. Ibid, p.68
55. *Dīwān al-Ḥallāj*, opt. cit. pp.38-39
56. Ibid, p.30
57. Ibid, p.45
58. *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, p.14
59. Ibid, p.25
60. Ibid, pp.57-58
61. *Dīwān al-Ḥallāj*, p.13
62. Ibid, p.90
63. *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, p.81-82
64. *Dīwān al-Ḥallāj*, pp.33-34
65. Ḥallāj, *Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn*, ed. Luis Massignon, Librarie Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1913, p.31
66. *Dīwān al-Ḥallāj*, p.82
67. A number of things suggest that Shiblī crossed the stage of unitive experience (*jam'*) and its concomitant states of ecstasy and intoxication (*sukr*), and reached the stage of

separation after union *(farq ba'd al-jam')* and became sober: One, Junayd's expectation about him expressed in these words: "Shibli is at present intoxicated *(sukrān)*; if he comes out of it he will prove to be a leader *(imām)* from whom people will benefit a lot" (Sarrāj: *al-Luma'*, p.382). Second, Shiblī's attitude that he should not talk publicly of his unitive experience which is reflected in his words: "I and Ḥusayn b. Manṣūr were one except that he talked of it openly and I kept it hidden:" (Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. p.121). Third, his comment on the words of Abū Yazīd that had emerged from the latters experience of union and identity with God: "Had Abū Yazīd been here he would have entered in Islam *(aslama)* at the hand of some of our boys" (Sarrāj: *al-Luma'*, p.479). This indicates that Shiblī had passed the stage of union *(jam')* which is, as the later sufis called it, the *kufr* of *ṭarīqat*, and reached the stage of post union separation *(farq ba'd al-jam')* which is the stage of *Islām of ṭarīqat*. Fourth, Ibn Arabī's words: "We do not accept Ḥallāj's statements about himself or about Shiblī. For Ḥallāj was intoxicated *(sukrān)* while Shiblī was sober" (*Futūḥāt*, Vol.II, p.12*)*. Finally, the fact that sufis in general distinguish him from Ḥallāj, and categorise him with Abū Yazīd who had in the end crossed over the stage of union.

68. *Diwān al-Ḥallāj*, p.20
69. *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, p.55
70. Aḥmad Sirhindī, *Maktūbat Imām Rabbānī*, opt. cit. Vol.III
71. Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah*, opt. cit. p.378
72. *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, p.66
73. Al-Sarrāj, *K. al-Luma'*, opt. cit, p.378
74. *Diwān al-Ḥallāj*, p.103
75. Ibid, p.75
76. *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, p.85
77. Ibid, p.28
78. Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mizān*, Vol:II, p.317

79. Sarrāj, *K. al-Luma'*, p.306. For other instances of Junayd's admonition to Shiblī see *K. al-Luma'*, pp. 487, 488; Kalābādhī, *al-Ta'arrrf*, p.172; Qushayrī *al-Risālah*, p.215
80. Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, p.121
81. Ibid, p.121
82. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.662
83. 'Alī Asghar Chowdharī, *'Ahd Nabwī Ke Nādir Waqi'āt*, Islamic Book Foundation, New Delhi-2, pp.145, 147
84. See the hadith 7132 in the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, al-fitan.
85. Sarrāj, *K. al-Luma'*, p.400
86. Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, p.285
87. Sarrāj, *K. al-Luma'*, p.400
88. Ibid, p.403
89. See the Qur'ān 3:49, 5:110; also 12:38, 40:78
90. 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-āwliyā'*, Vol.II, p.116
91. Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, p.121
92. Ibid, pp. 120-1
93. See Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, pp. 122-6; Ibn Hajar, *Lisān al-Mīzān*, Vol.II p.314; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa l-Nihāyah*, Vol.XI, 135-37;
94. Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, p.120
95. Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, pp.191-2
96. Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi l-Tārīkh* (Dar Sadir, Beirut, 1385/1965) Vol.VIII, p.127
97. Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntazam fī Tārīkh al-Mulūk wa l-Umam*, Hyderabad, 1359 A.H., opt. cit. Vol.III, p.162
98. Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, p.137
99. Adam Metz, *Islamic Civilization in the Fourth Century Hijrah*, Arabic transl. entitled *al-Ḥaḍārah al-Islāmīyah fi l-Qarn al-Rābi'* by M. 'Abd al-Hādī Abū Rīdah, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Beirut, 4th ed, 1967, Vol.II, p.59
100. *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, pp.123-4
101. Ibid, p.87
102. Ibid, p.105
103. *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*
104. Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣufīyah*, p.307

105. Ibid, p.311
106. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p.604-5
107. Ibid, p.263
108. 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, Vol.II, p.120
109. *Diwān al-Ḥallāj*, p.81
110. *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, p.19
111. Ibid, p.73
112. Ibid, p.63
113. Ibid, p.74
114. Sirhindī,*Maktūbāt*, opt. cit. Vol.II: letter95 p.1137; my *Sufism and Sharī'ah*, pp.46-7, 192-3, 238
115. *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, p.99. Sīrhindī quotes the same lines in his *Maktūbāt* (Vol.II: 95 p.1137 to illustrate the meaning of *kufr-i-ṭarīqah*.
116. Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mīzān*, Vol.II, p.315; al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah*, p.311
117. *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, p.70
118. Ibid, p.48
119. Ḥallāj, *K. al-Ṭawāsīn*, ed. L. Massignon, Paris, Librarie Paul Geuthner, 1913, VI *Ṭāsīn al-Azal wa l-Iblīs*, pp.41 ff.
120. Abū Yazīd, for instance is reported to have said: "My banner is higher than the banner of Muḥammad." A claim greater than this is reported of him. When a person recited the Qur'ānic verse (85:12): "Truly the grip of your Lord is strong," Abū Yazīd said: "My grip is stronger than His" (Badwī, *Shaṭḥāt al-Ṣūfīyah*, p.143).
121. *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, p.46
122. Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, pp.32-34
123. *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, p.29
124. Ibid, p.22
125. Ibid, p.47
126. Ibid, p.8
127. Ibid, p.117
128. Ibid, p.95
129. Ibid, p.16
130. Ibid, p.75-76

131. *Diwān al-Ḥallāj*, p.103
132. Ibid, p.64
133. 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, Vol.II, p.119
134. *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, p.108
135. 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, Vol.II, p.120
136. *Diwān al-Ḥallāj*, p.41
137. Ibid, p.82
138. Ibid, p.93
139. Ibid, p.96
140. Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, p.129; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa l-Nihāyah*, Vol.XI, p.134
141. Hajwerī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, p.192

Ghazālī: Doctrine of Divine Command

Ghazālī was the master theoretician of Sufism. Through his magnum opus, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* and other popular writings he secured for Sufism general acceptance in the Islamic world. Ghazālī achieved more than that. He reviewed the whole corpus of Islamic faith and life in the light of Sufism and succeeded in bringing out a comprehensive interpretation of Islam. He achieved that task by working out first a theory of knowledge in which mystical intuition *(kashf)* occupied very important position vis-à-vis reason and revelation, second, a view of being and reality in the light of which he interpreted *tawḥīd* and different virtues of religious life such as sincerity, gratitude, love and trust, and third a concept of the ultimate goal and happiness of man which he used to evaluate different goods, and fix the place of various activities in the scheme of life.

In practical Sufism Ghazālī did not command that importance. He neither added anything new to the sufi *ṭarīqah*, nor initiated any sufi order, nor even attracted a number of disciples. In this field he was only a camp follower, treading the path that the early masters had shown. In the following pages we will discuss his views on reality, mystical experience, and knowledge by *kashf*. We will also touch upon his view of the ultimate goal of life, without going into details, for that would require a chapter by itself.

Life

Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī[1] was born in 450/1058 at Tus near modern Mashhad in Iran. His father, a pious spinner of wool, died while Muḥammad Ghazālī and his

younger brother Aḥmad Ghazālī[2] (d. 520/1126) were still young. A Sufi friend of their father looked after their education, but the money which the father had left was soon spent, and they were compelled to join a public school. Ghazālī completed his education at Tūs and went to Jurjān at the south east corner of the Caspian sea. He spent a few years there and studied law (*fiqh*) with Yousuf Nassāj[3], a scholar of *fiqh* and a sufi. From Jurjan he went to Nishapur where he studied with the famous Ash'arī theologian and Shāfi'ī jurist, Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī[4]. Here he also came in contact with Abū 'Alī al-Farmadī[5] (d. 477/1084), the pupil of al-Qushayrī and the leader of the Sufis there. He stayed at Nishapur till Juwayni's death in 478/1085. Then he went out to the camp of Niẓām al-Mulk[6] (d. 485/1092), the grand vizir of the Saljūks. The vizir was greatly impressed by Ghazālī and appointed him professor at his Nizamiah College in Baghdad. This was in 484/1091.

Ghazālī has described his intellectual history in a short book, *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*, which he wrote at the age of fifty. He writes that while he was in his teens he gave up believing things on authority. The conflict of religions and sects that he saw around made him skeptical about their claims, and awakened in him a desire for seeking truth. He wanted to have a truth "which was above doubt, brooked no error and the contrary of which was inconceivable"[7]. When he reviewed his beliefs and judged them on this criterion, he found that they were lacking in certainty. He then proceeded to examine the grounds of belief. Sense-perception, he found, was often erring; its error was easily shown by reason. At first, the first truths of reason *(awwaliyāt)* appeared to be certain, and Ghazālī found no ground to doubt their validity. But, on reflection, he could not take them as final, and entertained the possibility of a higher truth which could reveal that reason was fallible, as reason had earlier shown that sense-perception was liable to err. This higher truth could well be, Ghazālī thought, the intuition of the mystics. Ghazālī knew not much of Sufism at that time; hence the admission of such a possibility could

only have been due to the influence of the sufis he had been in contact with; he certainly had no mystical experience to be sure of the efficacy of *kashf*. So eventually he found himself in a state of complete skepticism which lasted for two months till he experienced 'a light in the heart' that rescued him from uncertainty and reinstated his confidence in the 'necessary truths' of reason[8].

With faith in reason thus restored, Ghazālī embarked on an extensive study of theology, philosophy, the doctrines of the Bāṭinīs or the Ta'līmīyah, as he calls them, and the teachings of the sufis. He assumed that the truth could not lie outside them. It is unfortunate that he could not see any other alternative; he could have gone directly to the Qur'ān and Sunnah and sought the truth there. Anyway, he examined theology and found that it was good in so far as it defended the faith of the common man against heresies and innovations. But the real truth, it was quite unable to reveal[9]. Ghazālī expressed this opinion in his earliest work on theology, *al-Iqtiṣād fi l-I'tiqād*, and did not revise it ever after. He examined philosophy and found that it was also no sure means to truth. Reason he said, was flawless in logic and mathematics; it was also reliable in physics, provided one guarded oneself against hasty inferences. But it led to contradictions as soon as it dealt with ultimate questions of reality. Metaphysical truths, by the nature of the case, could not be demonstrated by reason. This was the essence of his famous critique of philosophy, *Tahāfut al-Falāsafah*. Ghazālī examined the doctrines of the Bāṭinīs at great length and concluded that their basic plea for faith in an infallible Imām as the only way out of warring beliefs was untenable and false[10].

After rejecting theology, philosophy and Batinism, one after the other, Ghazālī was left with Sufism wherein the truth, as he had assumed, must lie, and his study of the teachings and the works of Muḥāsibī[11] (d. 243/857), Abū Yazīd (d. 261/874), Junayd (d. 297/909), and Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī[12] (d. 386/996) only confirmed him in that belief. His study also underlined the necessity of practicing Sufism; he realized that sufi truths were

more a matter of experience than study. It also produced in him a sense of disillusionment from the life he was living. Ghazālī was enjoying the fame of a popular teacher who attracted three hundred students at a time to his lectures[13]. He had the reputation of being a great writer who defended faith and demolished heresy, and he enjoyed the material benefits that came to him in abundance. In the ultimate reckoning, however, all this was absolutely worthless and futile, because it was not for the sake of God. Gradually the sense of futility developed into a spiritual crisis. Ghazālī lost his appetite and failed to speak to his students. No treatment availed; the only cure he saw was to leave Baghdad and devote himself to sufi practices. After a period of vacillation, he left Baghdad in 488/1095 for Syria. He spent his time at the mosques of Damascus and Jerusalem in *dhikr*, prayer and contemplation. For initial guidance in this regard he seems to have turned to al-Fārmidī whom he had met at Nishapur before coming to Baghdad. After two years, he visited Makkah, performed Hajj (490/1096), and returned home visiting Baghdad on the way. At Ṭūs he lived a hard austere life, away from the people, and devoted himself to the purification of his soul and meditation. He built a cloister *(khānkah)*, established a school, taught students and wrote books. During this period, "innumerable truths" he says, "were revealed to him"[14]. He completed *Iḥyā' Ulūm 'l-Dīn* which he had begun in Syria. Then he brought out a summary of it in Persian under the title *Kīmiyā al-Sa'ādah*.

Ghazālī was very unhappy at the religious situation of the time. He was particularly grieved at the lack of faith in prophecy and the Prophetic Sharī'ah among the various sections of the society. This urged him to come out of seclusion and work for the revival *(tajdīd)* of religion. Right at that moment a son of the late Nizam al-Mulk persuaded Ghazālī to take up teaching at the Nizāmiyah College of Nishapur (499/1106). Ghazālī penned here the *Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl* and put the ideas of *Iḥyā 'Ulūm al-Dīn* in shorter treatises like *Arba'īn fi Uṣūl al-Dīn* for the use of the common man. Most

probably he also wrote here his last great work, *Al-Mustasfā*, on the principles of jurisprudence. Ghazālī spent three years (499-502) at Nishāpur, then he returned to his home town Tus, and took up a thorough study of Ḥadīth[15] literature. The last book which he finished just a fortnight before his death was *Iljām al 'Awām min 'Ilm al-Kalām*[16]. He died on the 14th Jumada al-Ukhra 505/18 th December 1111.

Development of His Thought

Ghazālī's thought on the issues with which we are concerned developed through stages. In the first stage which coincides with his stay at Baghdad, he appears as a faithful defender of Ash'arite theology. In the two great works of this period, the *Tahāfut al-Falasafah* and *Al-Iqtiṣād fi l-I'tiqād* he hardly diverges from the orthodox position.

The second stage of his thought begins after his conversion to Sufism. He came to hold ideas that were different from those he had entertained earlier, and for various reasons he preferred to tell them in different stages. It is unnecessary to add that he continued to uphold many of his earlier ideas. In the *Arba'īn fi Uṣūl il-Dīn* which is a very short popular summary of *Iḥyā 'Ulūm il-Dīn* he writes:

> "We have presented the creed elaborately and discussed the objections thereon in *al-Iqtiṣād fi l-I'tiqād* which has hundred folios. This is an independent book and contains the principal doctrines of the theologians. But, as compared to the conventional theology which is found in the books of the theologians, it goes into greater depth and almost knocks at the door of knowledge *(ma'rifah)*. However, all theology produces belief, not knowledge. What distinguishes the theologian from an ordinary man is that he knows what he believes; whereas an ordinary man simply holds some beliefs, the theologian believes as well as knows the arguments for his beliefs so that he can defend them against the innovations of the heretics. But

never does belief develop into peace of knowledge. If you want to smell from the fragrance of knowledge, you can find something of it discussed in the *Iḥyā al-'Ulūm* in the chapters on Patience and Gratitude, Love and Longing, and the first part of the chapter on Trust that discusses *tawḥīd*. You shall also get something in our book *Al-Maqṣad al-Asnā fi Ma'ānī Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā*. This shall be enough to bring you to the threshold of knowledge. But if you want to have a clear exposition of the truth of these beliefs, unrestrained and without mincing words, you would not find them except in some of our books which are closed to those who do not deserve them *(fī ba'ḍ kutubinā al-maḍnūn bihā 'alā ghayr ahlihā)*"[17].

This statement which has never been disputed by any writer is further supported by what Ghazālī says in the *Iḥyā'* in connection with his discussion of *tawḥīd* that he is not telling the truth clearly and not telling the whole truth[18]. His plea is that the *Iḥyā* is essentially concerned with practical knowledge *('ilm 'al-mu'āmalah)* and does not discuss the knowledge of reality through intuition *('ilm 'l-mukāshafah)* except occasionally and to the extent absolutely necessary. Ghazālī thus clearly distinguishes between beliefs *(i'tiqād)* that he has expounded in *al-Iqtiṣād fi l-I'tiqād* and between knowledge *(ma'rifah)* that he has chosen to divulge in two different stages, one in some parts of the *Iḥyā'* and his book *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā,* and the other in some of his esoteric writings.

There has been a lot of controversy since earliest times as to what these esoteric books are and what is the degree of their reliability. Those who regard Ghazālī as the exponent of *Sunnī Taṣawwuf* largely ignore these books, because they contain some unorthodox ideas. But they have no explanation for the words of Ghazālī we have quoted from the *Arba'īn* or the statements in the *Iḥyā* itself that indicate the change that occurred in his thought.

Not only does *Iḥyā* contain ideas on metaphysical questions which differ from those found in Ghazālī's earlier

works, it also contains a lot of other materials on various ethical and religious questions whose Islamicity is questionable. Ghazālī presented a *taṣawwuf* and an *akhlāq*, ethics which have a lot that is derived from the Quran and the Sunnah, as they have a lot which is not derived from these sources and a part of which is inconsistent with them.

One of the esoteric books of Ghazālī is *Mishkāt al-Anwār*. It contains references to many of his very well known books. Various writers such as Ibn Ṭufayl[19] (d. 481/1185), Ibn Rushd[20] (d. 595/1198) and Ibn Taymīyah[21] (d. 728/1327) have considered it a work of Ghazālī. A part of its ideas are found in *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā* to which there is a clear reference in the *Mishkāt*[22]. Further a manuscript of the book consisting of all the three chapters that it has was transcribed only four years after the death of Ghazālī is preserved in the Shāhid 'Alī Pāsha library of Istanbul[23]. There is, therefore, no ground to doubt the authenticity of the book.

The second esoteric work is *Ma'ārij al-Quds fī Madārij Ma'rifat al-Nafs*. Contrary to the practice of Ghazālī in other books, the *Ma'ārij* has no reference to any of his writings, nor is it referred to in any one of them, nor has it been mentioned by any early biographer including al-Murtaḍā. A further reason which goes against the book is that it contains a more clear commitment to the neo-Platonic metaphysics which Ghazālī rejected in his earlier works. But the reasons for the authenticity of the book are equally strong. There are a lot of ideas in the book which, as Dr. Sulayman dunya[24] has shown in detail, are found in the well known works of Ghazālī. If over and above them, the book contains some ideas that are not found in other books, that is what is naturally expected of an esoteric work. Some of these new ideas can be shown to be developing out of his earlier ideas stated in his exoteric books. For instance, the statement in the *Ma'ārij* that the attributes of God are not additional to *(zā'id 'alā)* the divine essence as the Asha'irah believe, can be shown, as we have done here, to be the final link in a gradual change Ghazālī's thought on the

issue underwent. For us the *Ma'ārij* is important for two reasons: one that it contains the most clear statement on an original idea of Ghazālī, namely the idea of the *Muṭā'* broached in the *Mishkāt*; and second that, of all the books of Ghazālī, it alone has a full discussion of the three characteristics of prophethood of which only one has been discussed in the *Mishkāt* and in the *Munqidh*[25]. In these two respects and some others, the *Ma'ārij* is a complement to the *Mishkat*. In the following discussion we shall draw upon the Ma'ārij on the issues we have mentioned. On the question of the place of Neo-Platonic metaphysics in Ghazālī's thought to which clear references are also found in other esoteric works like *Al-Risālat al-Ladunnīyah*, *al-Maḍnūn bihī 'alā Ghayr Ahlihī*, and *Ma'ārij al-Sālikīn* our policy will be different. I think that in determining Ghazālī's real ideas one should mostly ignore more clear commitments to neo-Platonism, not so much because they go against his earlier criticism of the theory, but because they are inconsistent with his views in the *Mishkāt*, which should be taken, I believe as a criterion for judging the authenticity of his esoteric ideas. Whereas it is true that esoteric books naturally contain ideas which their author does not like to share with common people, it is also true that they are more open to the interpolation of foreign ideas by interested persons. This is not only a possibility in the case of Ghazālī but also a fact. Many works have been actually attributed to him which have been shown not to be his work, as is clear from Dr. Badawī's work on Ghazālī's writings[26].

Concept of Reality

The Stage of *al-Iqtiṣād*

In the *Iqtiṣād* Ghazālī, like a faithful Ash'arite, presents God as the transcendental Creator of the world. The world by which term he means 'everything besides God'[27] did not exist and then came to exist, and God brought it into existence. As for God He exists by Himself and is eternal and everlasting. Ghazālī avoids calling God substance *(jawhar)*, because

substance refers ordinarily to the objects of the world[28]. He is an incorporeal reality beyond time and space. The references, therefore, to the hand, eye and face of God, or to His 'ascending the throne' and 'coming down,' or to His 'anger' 'joy' and 'longing' that occur in the Qur'ān and Hadīth are to be interpreted in a metaphorical sense *(majāz)*[29]. Similarly, his 'vision in the next life' should be understood as a fuller knowledge of God than that which is available to any man in this life[30].

Ghazālī explains God's unity to mean that God is an indivisible being, unique in His status, the sole Creator of the world and its absolute ruler. He does not think that God's unity is incompatible with a multiplicity of attributes. God is qualified with a number of attributes; and although many of them are no more than negations or relations, seven attributes: life, knowledge, will, power, hearing, seeing and speech are His essential qualities. These attributes which he calls *ṣifāt al-ma'nā*[31] are neither negations *(sulūb)* nor relations *(iḍāfāt)* nor states *(aḥwāl)* of God's essence as the Mu'tazilah and the philosophers like Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā thought; they are real qualities eternally subsisting in the Divine Essence. They are not to be identified with the Essence, because, to say 'God' is not to say, for instance, that God is knowing or that God is powerful. They are different from and in addition to *(zā'id 'alā)*[32] the Essence. But, on the other hand, they cannot be separated from the divine Essence, as God cannot be conceived without them. Hence they are different from and yet one with the Divine Essence.

Essential qualities are not only different from God's essence, they are also different from each other. Ghazālī subjects philosophers' move to reduce them to a single attribute of knowledge to a detailed criticism in the *Tahāfut*[33]. In the *Iqtiṣād*[34] he argues briefly like this: To say that God is knowing is not to say that God is powerful, and since the two propositions are different, knowing and powerful must, therefore, be two different qualities. This argument, Ghazālī

admits, raises a serious question. God's knowledge of one thing is different from His knowledge of another, because to say that God knows A is not to say that God knows B. Should we, therefore, pursuing the same argument, posit a multiplicity of knowledge in God? The Ash'arite view on this question is that God knows everything past or present by one eternal knowledge. Ghazālī apparently feels uneasy on the objection and tries to circumvent it by showing that the Ash'arite solution is right, because it is the middle course between two extreme solutions available: one held by the philosophers which posits the Essence alone and reduces the whole variety of meanings to its functions, and the other held by some Mu'tazilah and Karrāmiyah which affirms a separate attribute for each meaning. The middle course between these two extremes which the Ashā'irah have taken is to affirm different attributes if the difference between two meanings is fundamental, as is the case between knowing and willing, and to avoid multiplying attributes, if the difference is not fundamental, as is the case between knowing A and knowing B. In other words, the multiplicity of the objects of knowing does not necessitate a multiplicity of knowledge on the part of God. He knows everything by one eternal knowledge. Similarly, He wills everything by one eternal will, does everything by one eternal power, and speaks every word by one eternal speech.

The names of God are of four kinds[35]. The first kind of names refer to nothing other than God's essence. In this category Ghazālī mentions only one name, the Existent *(al-Mawjūd)*. The second category consists of names such as Eternal *(al-Qadīm)* and Everlasting *(al-Bāqī)* which refer along with the Essence to a negative meaning. The Eternal is the One who is unpreceded by non-existence, and the Everlasting is the One who shall never cease to exist. The third category consists of the seven names from the above mentioned attributes of meaning which refer along with the Essence to an additional quality. The fourth category consists of names that refer to some action such as the Creator and the Provident.

All the names of God are eternal. He is Existing, Eternal, Everlasting, Living, Knowing etc. from eternity to eternity. But in case of the active names, Ghazālī makes a qualification. God is Creator, he says, from eternity in a potential[36] sense only. That is, he is equipped with all the powers requisite for creation from eternity, although the actual act of creation is contingent. The world is contingent and has been created out of nothing.

God is all powerful. Ghazālī interprets this belief to mean that God is the only power that effects anything that is there, whether substance or accident, and anything that happens, event or act. Nothing produces anything. What we call 'causes' are mere occasions on which God brings into being things that we call 'effects'. The same is true of human acts. We do not effect anything by our power, it is God who effects them. He creates our acts as He creates our power; rather He creates power in us at the same moment as He creates our acts. Our acts are, therefore not effected by our power, but are effected along with *(ma')* our power by God. On account of this relation of co-existence *(ma'īyah)* between our power and our acts, Ghazālī justifies calling them our acts. To bring out this special relation between our power and our acts the Qur'ān uses, Ghazālī thinks, a special term *kasb*, acquisition as distinguished from *fi'l*, doing[37]. Acts are what we acquire rather than do. The real doer *(fā'il)* is God. Although this is what Ghazālī's interpretation of the concept of God's power means, he prefers, perhaps in deference to the usage of the Qur'ān, calling God the Creator *(khāliq)* or Originator *(Mukhtari')* of human acts rather than their doer *(fā'il)*. The phrase that 'God is the doer of (human) acts' does not occur in the *Iqtiṣād*.

Ghazālī does not discuss the nature of God's existence in the *Iqtiṣād*. However, he seems to assume a distinction between His essence and existence. God is an existing being *(mawjūd)*. Let us recall that Ghazālī treats *al-Mawjūd* as one of the names of God. This is, however, not a definite indication. More important in this connection is the absence of any statement such as God is existence or that His essence is

existence. The most positive evidence is the following passage in the *Iqtiṣād.*

> 'The Creator is an existent *(mawjūd)* and an essence *(dhāt)*, and He has an existence and reality *(thubūt wa ḥaqīqah)*. He differs from all other beings in that it is impossible for Him to be a contingent being, or to be qualified with what implies contingency, or what is inconsistent with the divine qualities of knowledge, power and the like[38].

That Ghazālī distinguished between the essence and the existence of God is also indirectly supported by his move to falsify the philosophers' two propositions, seventh and eighth, in the *Tahāfut* that God cannot be regarded as a being among other beings and distinguished from them through a *differentia*, and that He is pure existence and there is no essence to which His existence is attributed, for His essence is existence.

The stage of *Iḥyā'* and *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā*

In the beginning of the *Iḥyā'* Ghazālī states very briefly the Essentials of the Creed *(Qawā'id al-'aqā'id)* and adds to it a short explanation under the title *al-Risālah al-Qudsīyah fi l-'Aqā'id.* His position in the *Risālah* does not differ from the one he states in the *Iqtiṣād* on whose pattern the *Risālah* has been composed. But on two points a small shift may be noticed. The first concerns the nature of essential qualities. To be sure, the *Risālah* reiterates the earlier view that God knows not simply by His essence but by a knowledge, as He wills by a will and does by a power. But it does not say clearly that these attributes are additional *(zā'id 'alā)* to the Essence as the *Iqtiṣād* states. This omission is not by chance. It is rather a deliberate act, and is the first indication of the change Ghazālī's view on the issue was undergoing.

The second significant thing is a passage at the end of the *Risālah* that stresses the necessity of believing in the eternity of God's ideas. If God cannot be conceived as Knowing without a

quality of knowledge, the *Risālah* says, He cannot be conceived as Knowing without the known either.

> 'To assert a knower without knowledge is like asserting a rich without money, or knowledge without the knower, or the knower without the known; because knowledge, the known (*ma'lūm*) and the knower involve each other, as killing, the killed and the killer involve each other'[39].

Although Ghazālī does not elaborate, it is clear that by *ma'lūm* here he does not mean the objects of the world, as it would imply the eternity of the world which Ghazālī rejects. He means the *ideas* of things in the knowledge of God that exist from eternity, ideas which in their totality Ghazālī refers elsewhere in the *Iḥyā* as *'ālam al-malakūt*[40], the ideal world on whose pattern our world, *'ālam al-mulk* has been created. The point of the statement is that it is not enough to affirm the eternity of Divine qualities as the theologians do, it is also necessary to affirm eternal ideas as the philosophers and the sufis like Junayd hold. The concept of an eternal world of ideas is not found in the *Iqtiṣād*, but it is by no means alien to it. Rather it is implied in the concept of the eternity of knowledge which *Iqtiṣād* affirms, and Ghazālī has done nothing in the *Iḥyā* but stated that implication.

Ghazālī brings out another implication of the doctrine of eternal knowledge when he says that the objects of the world are necessary. They must exist in the world and must exist in the order determined from eternity in God's knowledge. Things are not possible in the sense that they may or may not exist, or exist in an order different from the order in which they actually exist. They are possible only in the sense that they are not necessary by themselves, although they are necessary by God. In fact there are only two categories of existence: necessary by itself which is God, and necessary by God which is the world. This point is stated not only in the *Iḥyā*[41] but also in the *Iqtiṣād*[42].

In the chapter on *Tawḥīd* and *Tawakkul* in the *Iḥyā* Ghazālī distinguishes between four grades of *tawḥīd*[43] or four

levels of affirming the unity of God. The first grade of *tawḥīd* is to pronounce by tongue that there is no god except Allāh while one's heart is either unconscious of the pronouncement or does not believe in its truth. This is the *tawḥīd* of the hypocrites *(munāfiqīn)*.

The second grade of *tawḥīd* is to believe in the heart what one pronounces by tongue. This is the *tawḥīd* of an ordinary Muslim, the *tawḥīd* which the theologian seeks to defend against innovations and heresies, as Ghazālī has himself done in the *Iqtiṣād*. The *tawḥīd* of the theologian does not differ from the *tawḥīd* of an ordinary Muslim except that he knows how to defend his faith, whereas the ordinary Muslim does not know that.

The third grade of *tawḥīd* is that one perceives in *kashf* that the entire multiplicity of things proceeds from One Being, that whatever happens in the world is effected by God, and that whatever is done by anyone, is, in fact, done by God. He is the one and the only actor and there is no actor besides Him. This is the stage of *tawḥīd fi'lī* (affirming One Actor only), and only those attain to it whom God has drawn near to Him *(al-muqarrabūn)*. Ghazālī explains *tawḥīd fi'lī* as follows:

> 'It means that you realize that there is no actor *(fā'il)* except God, and everything that is there — the creatures and their provisions, blessings and privations, life and death, prosperity and poverty, in short everything that has a name, is originated and produced solely and entirely by God without the participation of any other. If you truly realize this, you will not look to others, fear no one, put your faith and hope in no body, and rely on none except God. For He is the one and the only doer *(fā'il)* and everything other than Him is completely manipulated. Nothing has a power of its own to move a single particle in the heavens and the earth[44].

The doctrine stated here is the same as presented in the *Iqtiṣād*. The difference is only of terminology. In the *Iqtiṣād*, following the theological convention, Ghazālī likes to call God

Creator; in the *Iḥyā* he feels entitled on account of his mystic intuition to say that God is the only Actor *(fā'il)* and there is no actor besides Him.

How to reconcile this *tawḥīd* which asserts that there is no actor other than God with the *Shar'* which attributes acts to men? How can one attribute one and the same act to God as well as to man? Ghazālī raises this question and answers that man is doer in one sense, and God is doer in another sense, and there is no contradiction between the two. "God is doer in the sense that He is originator and producer *(mukhatari' wa mūjid)* and man is doer in the sense that he is the locus *(maḥall)* wherein God creates power after He creates will, and will after He creates knowledge. Man's will is related to power, and his power is related to movement like condition to the conditioned, but the act is related to God's power as effect is related to the cause and the originated with the originator. Whenever something is connected with power, the locus of the power is called doer, irrespective of the nature of the connection. The executioner is called killer, and one who orders killing is also called killer, because killing is connected with the power of both in two different ways, and that is why the act of killing is attributed to both"[45].

The fourth and the last grade of *tawḥīd* is that of the *ṣiddīqūn* those who have truly realized the truth. "They perceive nothing in existence" Ghazālī says, "except One Being". "This is the state" which sufis call *fana fi'l- tawḥīd*. For when the sufi does not perceive anything except One Being, he does not perceive himself either. And when he does not perceive himself on account of his absorption in *tawḥīd* he passes away from himself *(fanā)* in the perception ot unity. That is to say, he is no more conscious of himself and the world"[46]. In later sufi terminology this experience was called *waḥdat al-shuhūd*.

How does the sufi perceive the unity of being and what is the nature of that unity? Ghazālī answers this question in two different languages. We would call them the language of act and the language of being *(wujūd)*. The former is the dominant

language in the *Iḥyā* and *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā*. The latter is also there[47], but it is by no means prominent. It finds its full expression in the *Mishkāt al-Anwār*. I will discuss the first language here and postpone the discussion of the latter to the following section.

Ghazālī says that one perceives the unity of being when "one does not see the whole as a multiplicity but perceives it as a unity"[47]. "This is" he asserts "the ultimate stage of *tawḥīd*". How is this vision possible in face of the apparent multiplicity of things? To this question his answer is as follows:

> "It depends upon how you look at a thing. If you look at a thing from one angle, it is one, but if you look at it from another angle it is many. For instance, if you look at the various parts of man, his body, his soul, arteries, bones etc. you see him many. But if you look at him as a man, you see him one. Similarly, there are many ways of looking at what is in existence – the Creator and the created objects. If you look at existence from one angle it is one, and if you look at it from another angle it is many, and in some ways of looking multiplicity is much more prominent than in others"[48].

It is clear from this explanation that the ultimate stage of *tawḥīd* which Ghazālī is talking of does not mean negating the separate existence of things, nor identifying their existence with the existence of God. Unity is only a matter of *rūyah*, perception, as he puts it, or of *shuhūd* as later sufis called, in which things do not appear as existing separately from God but as forming a unity with Him, and the seer is so much occupied with the perception of that unity that he is no more conscious of the objects of the world or his own being.

Ghazālī does not elaborate the nature of the unity which the mystic perceives. But there is no doubt that the unity that he has in mind is the unity which an act has with its actor or a composition has with its composer. This becomes clear when he compares the ultimate stage of *tawḥīd* with the earlier stage of *tawḥīd fi'lī*. He writes: "The mystic who perceives no actor

except One, reality is revealed to him as it is"[49]. This means that the truth which the mystic realizes in the last stage is not different from his earlier realization that there is no actor other than God. What distinguishes the *tawḥīd* of the last stage from that of the previous stage is not a new insight but only a concentration of perception. "The fourth stage is higher," he says, "than the stage of unity of the Actor, because the latter involves the perception of the other and attention to multiplicity, while the former means perceiving nothing except the One Real Being *(al-Wāḥid al-Ḥaqq)*"[50].

At various places in the *Iḥyā* and *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā* Ghazālī has described the relation of God with the world in terms of an actor and his acts, an author and his composition, a maker and the things he makes. For instance: "All that is there other than God is His composition and His making"[51]. "Nothing is in existence except God and His acts"[53].

Proceeding on this basis, Ghazālī explains the perception of One Being in the chapter on Love in the *Iḥyā'* as follows:

> "One whose vision is strong and whose power is not weak perceives even in his sober states nothing except God and knows none other than Him. He knows that there is nothing in existence except God, and his acts are the effects of His power, and hence dependent upon Him. In fact, they have no existence separate from Him. Existence is of God alone by Whom all acts exist. One whose condition is this does not look at any act but looks at the Actor, and forgets the acts as such: heavens, earth, animals and trees. He rather looks at them as the work *(ṣun')* of the Real One. In this way his perception does not go beyond God to anything else"[54].

In *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā* he puts it as follows:

> "One who says I know no one other than God is also right. For there is nothing in existence except God and His acts. When he looks at God's acts not as heavens and earth and trees, but as His work *(san'atahū)*, he does not know

anything except the Lord, and he is entitled to say "I do not know except God" or "I do not see except God""[55].

The language of act is essentially a language of creation interpreted in a special way. It presumes the existence of things separate from God but negates their efficacy. Theologians other than Ghazālī might interpret creation in a way that does not deny causality altogether but only limits the efficacy of things and of human will. Ghazālī would take away that limited efficacy too, and leave to things an empty existence only.

Towards the end of *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā* Ghazālī has a chapter in which he shows how the seven attributes of God which the Ashā'irah regard distinct from and additional to the Divine Essence can be reduced to His Essence as the Mu'tazilah and the philosophers do. Introducing the chapter, he writes: "Although this chapter does not fit in the book, I chose to put it here briefly in response to a particular request. Nevertheless, if any one does not like to include it, he can do so, because it is not important so far as the book is concerned"[56]. This apology is not at all satisfactory. We are led to think that Ghazālī was in principle reconciled to reducing in some way the variety of God's attributes to His essence at the time he wrote the book. Of course, that does not mean that Ghazālī was ready to accept the details of the doctrines of the Mu'tazilah or the philosophers. He was certainly not prepared to adopt the interpretation, for instance, of God's speech which either has given. The chapter is important in the study of the change Ghazālī's view underwent on the issue of attributes. I will quote the relevant portion in full. He writes:

> "Though these people (i.e. the Mu'tazilah) deny attributes and affirm the Essence alone, they do not deny actions nor the manifold negations and relations. They agree with us on the attributes which we have classified under these categories. But so far as seven attributes – life, knowledge, power, will, hearing, vision and speech – are concerned, they are in their view reducible to the Essence. Hearing, in their view, means knowledge of sounds, and seeing means

knowledge of colour and other visible things. Speech, according to the Mu'tazilah, is a divine act, and God speaks means that He creates speech in an inanimate body. According to the philosophers, speech means hearing of a sound by a prophet that is created in him such that he hears articulated words, although the words are not there, as it happens in a dream. The words are God's because they are heard by the Prophet not as a result of any human action or voice. The attribute of life means God's knowledge of Himself, because whoever is conscious of himself is called alive, and who is not conscious of himself is not called alive. We are now left with will and power. The will in their view means that God knows the good and the order of good and creates as He knows. His knowledge of a thing is the sufficient cause for its existence. When God knows that there is good in a thing that thing happens, and when there is nothing unpleasant in it, he is pleased with it, and one who is pleased with a thing is the one who wills it. In short, will means knowledge without any element of displeasure.

"Power means that God does when he wills and does not do when He wills. As the act is known (beforehand) and as will means knowing that something is good, so when He knows that there is good in something, it exists, and when He knows that there is no good in something, He does not bring that in existence. The existence of an order of good does not require more than that it is known to God, and the non-existence of what does not exist needs nothing more than God's knowledge that there is no good in it. The order of ideas is, therefore, the cause of the order of existence, and the order of existence follows the order of ideas. They say that we, human beings, need along with knowledge a power to realize an idea, for we act through organs which must be in proper order and strong. But God does not act through organs, hence His knowledge of a thing is sufficient to produce it. Thus power is also reduced to knowledge.

"They further reduce knowledge to the Essence. As God knows Himself by Himself, knowledge, the knower and the known are one. God knows other things through His essence, because He knows His essence as the source of all that exists. So He knows every existing thing through His essence and as implied in it. Hence, the question of the multiplicity of knowledge does not arise"[57].

The Stage of *Mishkāt* and *Ma'ārij*

Ghazālī explains the ultimate stage of *tawḥīd* in the language of being in the chapter on Thanksgiving *(Shukr)* in the *Ihyā'* as follows:

"To perceive things from the eyes of pure *tawḥīd* is to see that God is the thanks-giver and the thanked, the lover and the loved. One has this perception when one realizes that there is nothing in existence other than God, and everything is perishing except His face *(wajhuhū)*, and that this is true every moment from eternity to eternity. For the other is that which may be conceived to exist by itself. But such an other does not exist; rather it is impossible for it to exist. The Real Existent *(al-Mawjūd al-Ḥaqq)* is that which is there by itself. And that which is not there by itself does not exist by itself. It depends upon another and, therefore, exists by another. Hence, if you consider the other itself and do not consider any thing else you will see that it does not exist. What exists is that which is there by itself, and that which is there by itself shall continue to be there, even if the other does not exist. And if along with sustaining itself, it sustains others through its own existence, then it is the Sustainer *(al-Qayyum)* and there is no sustainer except One and the other is inconceivable. Hence there is nothing in existence except the Living One, the Sustainer who is One and Eternal. If you look at things from this angle, you will see that everything proceeds from Him and returns to Him. He is, therefore, the thanks-giver and the object of thanks, the lover and the object of love"[58].

In the discussion of the divine name, *al-Ḥaqq* in *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā* Ghazālī writes:

> "The impossible in itself *(al-mumtana' be dhātihī)* is absolutely unreal *(bāṭil)*. The necessary in Himself *(al-Wājib bi Dhātihī)* is absolutely real *(al-Ḥaqq)* and the possible in itself but necessary by another is real in one respect and unreal in another. In respect to its essence *(dhāt)*, it does not exist and is unreal. In respect to the other than itself, it acquires *(istafāda)* existence and, therefore, in virtue of that which turns to the Bestower of existence *(mufīd al-wujūd)* it exists. In this respect it is real, but in itself it is unreal. This is why "everything is perishing except His face". This is true from eternity to eternity, and not only at times. For everything other than God is bereft of existence from eternity to eternity, and exists by Him. In short, it is unreal *(bāṭil)* in its essence, and real *(ḥaqq)* by other than itself. From this you will know that the Absolutely Real *(al-Ḥaqq al-Muṭlaq)* is the self-existing One, and from Him everything receives its reality"[59].

In the first chapter of the *Mishkāt al-Anwār* Ghazālī puts the thing as follows:

> "Existence of a thing is either from itself or from something else. That which has existence from other than itself has a borrowed *(musta'ār)* existence that does not subsist in itself. If you consider this thing in its essence *(dhāt)*, it is pure non-being *('adam maḥaḍ)*, and exists only in virtue of its relation with another. This is not the real existence, as you have come to know from the parable of borrowed clothes and riches. Hence, the Real Existent *(al-Muwjūd al-Ḥaqq)* is God only, as the Real Light *(al-Nur al-Ḥaqq)* is He alone.
>
> From here the mystics move from the abyss of similitude *(majāz)* to the zenith of reality and attain to their highest spiritual progress, and see through their eyes that there is none in existence except God and that 'everything is

perishing except His face', perishing not at one time or the other but from eternity to eternity. Anything else is inconceivable. For everything other than God, if you consider its essence *(dhāt)*, is pure non-being, and if you consider it in respect to that existence which flows *(yasrī)* to it from the First Real, it will appear existing not in itself but in virtue of the face that turns to its Originator *(yalī Mūjidahū)*. Hence, the existent is the face of God and nothing else. Everything, in short, has two faces, one turned to its own essence and the other to its Lord. In respect to its own face, *(wajh nafsihī)* it is non-existent, and in respect to the face of God *(wajh Allah)*, it exists. Hence nothing exists except God and His face, and everything is perishing eternally except His face."

"These Gnostics do not have to wait for the Day of resurrection to hear the Divine words 'Whose is the rule today? Of God, the One, the Dominant'[60]. These words never cease to ring in their ears. They do not understand by the word 'Allāh Akbar' that He is greater than others. Certainly not. For nothing exists along with Him which is other than Him, so that He may be greater than it. The other than Him does not have the status of co-existence *(ma'īyah)* with Him, it has a subordinate status *(taba'iyah)* only, rather it has no existence except in virtue of the face that is turned to it. Hence what exists is His face, and it is inconceivable that He be greater than His face. The real meaning of the words is that God is greater than our assertion that He is great in a relative and comparative sense, and He is greater than that any one may know the reality of His greatness, be he a prophet or an angel. Nobody truly knows God except God... We have discussed this point at length in our book *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā fī Ma'ānī Asmā' Allāh al-Husnā*"[61].

After reading these three passages one after the other, one cannot but reach the conclusion that their author is one and the same person who has chosen for some reason to express the

same ideas in all the passages with increasing clarity, somewhat inhibited in the first, then more clearly in the second, and with full clarity and freedom in the last. One would also shed off any doubts that one might have regarding the authenticity of the last passage or the authorship of the book where it occurs.

Ghazālī distinguishes in these passages between real and non-real existence. That which exists by itself is absolutely real; this is God. That which does not exist and cannot exist *(al-mumtana')* is absolutely unreal. And that which does not exist by itself but exists by something other is unreal in itself, but real through that by which it exists. The world does not exist by itself, therefore it is unreal, but it exists by God, therefore, it is real. In short, it is both unreal and real, unreal in itself and real by God.

The idea that nothing really exists except God, and the objects of the world have no existence of their own, and exist only through God is already made in the passages we have quoted in the previous section. What is new in these passages is a new analysis of things which is combined with this idea. An object may be analyzed, Ghazālī thinks, into an essence *(dhāt)* and existence *(wujūd)*. The essence of a thing which the thing is in itself may be regarded as different from its existence, which it receives from the Bestower of existence. Considered in their essence, things are devoid of existence, are pure non-being *('adam maḥaḍ)* and unreal *(bāṭil)*. They exist in virtue of the existence that proceeds from God's existence and are real in respect to that existence only.

Ghazālī calls the existence which proceeds to things from God, in virtue of which they exist, the 'face of God'. Hence, he concludes that nothing exists except God and His face, or 'everything is perishing except His face'. The real question in this regard is how does the existence by which things exist stand with the existence of God. Is it same as God's existence and a determination of it, as Ibn 'Arabi[62] thinks, or is it an emanation[63] of the divine existence, in a sense one with it and

in a sense different from it? Or is it, to consider a third possibility, an adumbration and shadow of the divine existence, as Sirhindi[64] thinks? In studying Ghazālī this question is rarely raised. But a little reflection will show that the question is very important, rather crucial, in determining his exact position. Ghazālī himself does not raise the question and, his words that may have a bearing on it, are unclear. Therefore, it is possible to claim that Ghazālī believed in the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, oneness of being, and to cite in support such words as 'things exist by the existence of God', or point out that the phrase 'face of God' suggests the identity of things' existence with God's existence. As a further support, one may also cite Ghazālī's interpretation of 'Allah Akbar' and his categorical denial of the existence of other than God.

But all these suggestions can be counteracted. One may point out that, though Ghazālī says that 'things exist by the existence of God, he also says that 'things exist in respect to that existence which flows to them from the First Real' which may and may not be identical with the latter. Further, the words 'things exist by the existence of God' may be interpreted in more than one way, hence one cannot infer from these words with an amount of certainty that Ghazālī believed that things exist by the same existence by which God Himself exists. Their existence may be, as we have pointed out, an emanation from God's existence, or an adumbration of it. The metaphor of 'face' is likewise amenable to different interpretations, and the denial of the existence of other than God can be understood in various ways consistent even with the concept of creation, as we have seen in the passages quoted in the earlier section.

The following passage of *Mishkāt* has been quoted as the most clear statement of *Waḥdat al-wujūd*:

> 'The world is full of lights... all of them lead to the light of lights, the origin *(mabda')* and source *(manba')* which is God, the one without a partner. All lights are borrowed and the real light is His alone, and everything is His light. Rather He is all, rather nothing has an existence *(huwīyat)*

except in a metaphorical sense. Hence there is no light except His, and every light is light due to that which reaches *(yalīhi)* it and not from itself. The face of everything that has a face is turned to Him and faces Him.... There is no he except He; for He means that to which you point, and every pointing is towards Him. Whenever you point to any thing, you really point to Him, even if you may not be aware of it, because of your ignorance of the ultimate reality *(ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqā'iq)* we have talked of. You do not point to the light of the sun but to the sun. Everything stands to Him in the same relation as light stands to the sun. Hence 'there is no god except Allah' is the *tawḥīd* of the common man and 'there is no god except He' is the *tawḥīd* of the elect[65].

Commenting on this passage, Dr. Abu l-'Alā Afīfī writes in the Introduction to his edition of the *Mishkāt* that 'Ghazālī reaches in these lines a view that is very close to the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*; it is difficult to think otherwise'[66]. But he also points out the difference between *waḥdat al-wujūd* and Ghazālī's view in these words: 'Ghazālī never says that God *(al-Ḥaqq)* is the world, or that they are two ways of viewing the same reality, or that the difference between them is only subjective, as Ibn 'Arabī said after him. He only says that in the real sense nothing exists except God, and the world has no existence except as a reflection of God's existence in it, just like the reflection of the moon on various mirrors. And this, in his opinion, is the truth which reason upholds and which the mystic intuition confirms'[67]. And finally, he absolves him of believing in *waḥdat al-wujūd*: "Perhaps what frees Ghazālī of a sort of belief in *waḥdat al-wujūd* is what he writes towards the end of this chapter (i.e. the first chapter of the *Mishkāt*) explaining his words 'God is with every being' as light is with the objects'. 'God is with everything' means that He is before everything'. Thus, according to Ghazālī, to say that He is before everything is to say that God is eternal, and to say that He is above everything is to affirm His transcendence. And the

belief in the transcendence (of God) in the true religious sense is not consistent with the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*"[68].

The fact is that Ghazālī did not believe in the type of *waḥdat al-wujūd* which was expounded later by Ibn 'Arabī. As Ibn 'Arabi formulates that philosophy, it consists of two separate propositions: One is that *wujūd* in the real sense is one and identical with God's existence. The other is that the world is a determination of God, one with God in existence and different from God only as a determination. Ghazālī holds the first doctrine that, in the real sense of the term, God alone exists. He also holds its corollary that the world, considered in itself or apart from God, does not exist at all. But Ghazālī does not subscribe to the second doctrine that the world is a determination of God's existence and identical with it. The utmost that he says is that 'everything stands to Him (God) in the same relation as light stands to the sun' or 'everything is His light, rather He is all', or 'there is no he except He'. These statements do not entitle one to attribute to Ghazālī the belief in the identity of existence between the world and God. For they can be equally cited as arguments for the view that the world is an emanation from God, or the view that the world is an adumbration of divine existence. The statements that 'He is all' and that 'there is no he except He' are also consistent with the doctrine of *tawḥīd fi'lī* that there is no actor except God.

Ghazālī's observation on mystical union, following the passage from the *Mishkāt* that we have quoted above, is a further argument that Ghazālī does not identify the existence of the world with the existence of God. He interprets union as a subjective experience, as a matter of mere perception *(rūyah or shuhūd)* and denies that it can be a real union. He writes: "The words 'I am the Real' or 'Glory be to me, how great I am!' or 'There is none in the robe except God'[69], are the words of lovers in a state of intoxication and should be forgotten rather than quoted. When the state of intoxication passes off and they return to reason, which is God's balance on earth, they realize that their experience was not a real union but a semblance of

union *(shibh al-ittiḥād)*. Their words are like the words of lovers in the fury of love. 'I am the one I love, and the one I love is me'. This state is called the *fanā* of the mystic, rather the *fanā l-fanā*, because the mystic passes away from himself and passes from (the consciousness of) passing away, because he is not in this state conscious of himself, nor of his unconsciousness of himself. For, if he is conscious of his unconsciousness, he is conscious of himself. Such a state of the absorption of the mystic in God is called in the language of metaphor union *(ittiḥād)* and in the language of reality *tawḥīd*"[70].

Ghazālī did not subscribe to the *waḥdat al-wujūd* of the kind of Ibn 'Arabī. But that is not the only interpretation of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. There may be other interpretations also. That is to say, one can combine the first doctrine that existence is one and is identical with God with a different view of the relation between God and the world, which is not the view of Ibn 'Arabī. This is what Ghazālī actually does. He tries to combine the doctrine of one existence which is essentially a mystical doctrine with the doctrine of the transcendence of God which the theologians hold, and which he himself tries to defend in his theological writings. Ghazālī develops the first doctrine that nothing exists besides God in the first chapter of the *Mishkāt* and presents the second in the last chapter, where he discusses the various categories of beliefs and their believers. God as He is, is hidden from them all behind different veils, some of pure darkness, others of darkness and light combined, and still others of pure light. Those who are separated by the veils of pure light include various categories of philosophers. Some of them believe that God moves every heaven Himself. Others who go beyond them believe that God does not move the heavens Himself, He rather moves them by moving the Outermost Body which encompasses them all. The third category of the philosophers believe that God moves heavens neither Himself nor through moving the Outermost Body, rather He commands an angel who moves the heavens. Hence, God, in their opinion, is the *Muṭā'*, the One who orders

and whose order is carried out. Ghazālī thinks that although these people have gone quite far in transcendentalising God, they have not gone far enough and have not arrived at the truth. Only those people attain the truth to whom "it is revealed that the *Muṭā'* is characterized with an attribute that is inconsistent with pure unity and highest perfection. It is revealed to them that the *Muṭā'* is like the sun among the lights. They, thus, go beyond the one who moves the heavens, the one who moves the Outermost Body, the one who is the commander ordering their movement, and reach the One who creates the heavens, creates the Outermost Body, and creates the orderer of the movement. They thus reach the One who is above all that the eyes of their predecessors have perceived"[71].

Thus Ghazālī goes in this passage of the final chapter of the *Mishkāt* to the ultimate limit of transcendentalising God. He places Him above every direct and indirect involvement in the world. God manages the world neither Himself nor through a medium. He does not even command the angels to administer the world. Ghazālī relegates that function to a Commander who orders and whose orders are carried out. In fact, he is the *Muṭā'* and not God. Ghazālī does not discuss the reasons for differentiating between God and the *Muṭā'*. He, however, indicates that the function of ordering is inconsistent with absolute unity and perfection and, hence, cannot be attributed to God in the final understanding.

We have thus an absolutely transcendental God in the last chapter of the *Mishkāt*, while we have an all-pervading God in its first chapter. Ghazālī as, we have seen in the discussion of the first chapter, perceives God in everything, sees no he which is not He and likens God to the sun and the objects of the world with the rays of the sun such that God appears to him as all that is there. He is present in everything and is the reality of everything, the sole power acting in everything and the only doer of every action.

This seems to be a flagrant contradiction. But there is, in fact, no contradiction. Transcendence and immanence are the

two aspects of God, each complements the other. Ghazālī understands this dual aspect of God on the analogy of the soul whose understanding is the gateway to the understanding of God. Ghazālī refers to this point in his different books including the *Iḥyā*[72], but he discusses it at length in the *Ma'ārij al-Quds*[73]. As the body taken by itself and apart from the soul, is dead and a non-entity, similarly the world, apart from God, is non-existent and unreal. As the body lives by the life of the soul, the world exists by the existence of God. As all movement in the body is caused by the soul, similarly, every event in the world is produced by God. As the soul pervades the body, God pervades the world. But as the soul is different in nature and essence from the body, similarly, God is different from the world, and as the soul transcends the body, God transcends the world.

The concept of the *Muṭā'* that Ghazālī introduces in the *Mishkāt* is an effort to philosophically explain the dual relation of God with the world that he illustrates by the example of the soul and the body. The concept of *Muṭā'* has been the object of surmise and controversy among the scholars[74]. The reason is that Ghazālī does not elaborate the concept in the *Mishkāt*. He only says that the *Muṭā'* lacks the pure unity and complete perfection that is of God. But he does not say anything about its nature and its relation to God. For this, one has to turn to the *Ma'ārij al-Quds*. I shall quote below the relevant passage:

> "The highest of the originated beings *(al-mubda'āt)* is Intelligence which God has originated with a command without matter or time preceding it. It is not preceded except by the Command *(al-Amr)*. But we cannot say about the Command that it is preceded by God or unpreceded... Intelligence, however, precedes the Soul in respect to essence *(bi l-dhāt)*, not in respect to time, space or matter... The Soul precedes time and what is in time; time does not apply to the soul, rather time and duration originate in the Soul, as it longs for the perfection of the Itelligence...

"We mean by the Command *(al-Amr)* the Divine Power *(al-Quwwat al-Ilahīyah)*. To say that Intelligence proceeds from it by way of origination is merely to say that Intelligence is something originated. No, we rather want to put the First Real Being above acting directly. However, the Originator, in reality, is He whom creation and command belong, glorified is He.

'The soul is one but it has many faculties. It controls the body and the animal soul and does in every context a different function through different faculties. Its function at one place is vision, at another hearing, at a third smelling, at a fourth common-sense *(al-ḥiss 'l-mushtarik)* and, at a fifth imagination and fantasy etc. Similarly, the Command of the First Real Being (glorified is He) in respect to the existence of Intelligence is origination *(ibda')*; in respect to its perpetuation actual fulfillment; in respect to the Soul completion and realization of potentiality into actuality; in respect to Nature movement; in respect to bodies manipulation; in respect to compounds formation; in respect to informed bodies animation; in respect to animals sensation and inspiration; in respect to human reason obligation *(taklīf)* and description *(ta'rīf)*; and in respect to prophets command and speech, words and logos, books and messages. "God does not speak to man except through inspiration *(waḥy)*, or from behind a veil, or sends a messenger who reveals by His permission what He wants. He is most High and Wise"[75]. In short, the supreme command, in respect to existing beings is creation and origination; and, in respect to affairs of persons under obligation is words that are commands and prohibitions, promise and threat, information and enquiry"[76].

This statement should set at rest all conjectures about the *Muṭā'*. The *Muṭā'* is the eternal Command *(al-'Amr)* of God, by which He originates everything in eternity that is originated and creates everything in time that is created. It is not an entity

separate from God, nor an emanation of His being. It is neither a saint incarnating God on earth nor the Holy spirit performing functions of the Demiurge. It is the power of God *(al-quwwat al-Ilāhīyah)*, eternal by His eternity. In one sense, it is one with the Divine essence, which does not, therefore, precede it; in another sense it is also different from the Divine essence, which can, therefore, be regarded as preceding it. But the Divine essence does not precede it in the sense in which the One of Plotinus precedes its first emanation, Intelligence. It rather precedes in the sense in which an essence precedes its attributes. In fact, the *Muṭā'* of the *Mishkāt* is a quality of God conceived on the pattern of the qualities of God in Ash'arite theology as one with the essence and different from it at the same time. The model before Ghazālī is not the emanation of neo-Platonism which he definitely rejects in the *Tahāfut*, and, in spite of employing various terms of that philosophy, he never adopted it again. From the passages of the *Ma'ārij* we have quoted, it is clear that Ghazālī distinguishes between the relation which the divine Command has with God and the relation which the Intelligence has with the divine Command. Whereas the former relation is an essence-attribute relation, the latter is an originator – originated relation, which, in Ghazālī's terminology, means creation not in time. Intelligence, Soul and the whole world that is other than God is created either in time or not in time. Creation is different from the Creator and not a continuation of the Creator in the form either of determination of the divine existence as, Ibn 'Arabi believes, or a lower manifestation, which the philosophers call emanation. Just as the soul is completely different from the world, but in spite of that difference, it operates in the body and through the body by means of its different faculties, similarly God operates in the world by means of His Command which takes different names in different contexts, as Ghazālī has explained at length.

The language in which Ghazālī describes the *Muṭā'* in the *Mishkāt* smacks of personification. But Ghazālī is far from personifying the Command of God, for that would lead to a concept of divinity on Christian lines or to the concept of

Shaktī on the Indian pattern, which Ghazālī would be the first to reject. The best way probably to express his intentions will be to distinguish between two states of God, one God in His pure essence, and the other God qualified with the power of eternal Command. The reason for such a distinction is mystical as well as philosophical. Ghazālī needs it to justify the mystical experience of *fanā al-fanā* which is devoid of every distinction, and he needs it, secondly, to maintain God's transcendence, as he conceives it, simultaneously with His immanence. Considered in Himself, God transcends the world, but considered in His operation into the world as God qualified with the power of eternal Command, He is the immanent reality of the world. Ghazālī does not make that distinction but, keeping all things in view, that will probably be the most faithful interpretation of his ideas.

If we accept this interpretation, it will enable us to integrate the shifts in his view on the issue of divine attributes that we have noted in his different books, a shift which culminates in the *Ma'ārij* in the statement: "All the attributes of God are different considerations *(i'tibārāt)*, relations and negations; they are not in addition to the Essence and do not imply any kind of multiplicity in the Essence"[77]. This statement need not be taken as contradicting the view Ghazālī has expressed in his theological writings that the attributes of God are over and above His Essence. It need not also be considered as conflicting with the interpretation of the Divine Command which is conceived on the pattern of the Ash'arite view of qualities. When God is considered in His Essence, He is above all distinctions between essence and attributes and between essence and existence[78]. At this stage the attributes are one with the essence, and existence is also identical with it. But, on the level of the Divine Command, the attributes are at once one and different from the Essence.

Nature of Mystic Experience

At the end of *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā* Ghazālī discusses the sufi experience of Union with God. He is commenting on the words of Abū l-Qāsim 'Alī al-Gurgānī[79] that in the ultimate stage, the attributes of God become the attributes of the mystic. These words, he says, may be understood in five[80] ways all of which are wrong except one. The first and the only right way of understanding these words is that the mystic acquires attributes which resemble in a way the attributes of God. However, the resemblance is not more than a participation in name *(mushārakah fi l-'ism)*. The second possible interpretation, which Ghazālī rules out, is that the mystic rises up to a stage when he participates in the essence of the divine attributes and becomes a divine being like *(mumāthil)* God. The mystic never participates in the genus and the essence *(al-naw' wa l-māhiyah)* of the Divine. This is simply impossible, for that would imply, among other things, the omniscience and the omnipotence of the mystic, which is plainly false.

The third possible interpretation is that the divine attributes pass on into the mystic. This Ghazālī says is completely absurd. The qualities of one thing never pass on into another, far less the qualities of God. The very idea of the transmission of qualities is ridiculous. The fourth possibility is that the mystic unites with God. Ghazālī examines the idea in detail. If union *(ittiḥād)* means that the servant *(al-'abd)* becomes the Lord *(al-Rabb)*, that is a contradiction in terms and impossible. For never does one thing become another. Zayd does not become Umar, and black does not become white. The difference between God and man is incomparably greater than the difference between one man and the other, or between white and black. How can man become God? When Sufis talk of union *('ittiḥād)*, they do not mean, Ghazālī says, becoming one with Reality. They use the term in a metaphorical sense. Take, for instance, the words of Abū Yazīd: "I sloughed off myself as a snake sloughs off its skin, hen lo and behold! I was He". Ghazālī says that this means

that one who casts of his desires, wishes and aspirations, leaves no room in himself for anything other than God, God becomes his sole aspiration *(hamm)*. And when the majestic and the beautiful attributes of God enter the heart and one is completely engrossed in Him, one is, as if, He, not that one is He in reality. Please differentiate, Ghazālī says, between the words 'One is, as if, He', and 'one is He'. At times we say: 'One is He' to communicate the idea that one is, as if, he. Poets sometimes say: 'I am, as if, the one I love' and sometimes 'I am the one I love'. Ghazālī does not, however, rule out the possibility that some mystics may really identify themselves with God. When one looks at one's own attainments and the reflection of God's glory in oneself, one might say, Ghazālī admits, 'I am God'. But such a person commits the mistake which Christians committed in saying that Jesus is God, when they saw in him the reflection of God's glory. Referring to Ḥallāj's saying, 'I am God', Ghazālī says that these words may likewise be interpreted in two ways, metaphorical and real. If Ḥallāj meant the latter, he was certainly mistaken. The fifth possibility is *ḥulūl*, infusion, or indwelling. One might think that God has entered in man or man has entered in God. Logically *ḥulūl* means, Ghazālī says, either the entry of one body into another, or the subsistence of an accident in a substance. Neither is possible between God and man, and Ghazālī rules out the possibility of *ḥulūl* also.

After rejecting all the wrong notions of union, Ghazālī describes the goal of the mystic as *wuṣūl*, reaching God. He writes: "*Wuṣūl* means that the real form of God *(hilyat al-Ḥaqq)* is revealed to the mystic so that he becomes completely absorbed in Him. When he looks at his knowledge, he does not know anything other than God, and when he looks at his aspirations, he does not find any desire other than God, and his entire being is engaged in perceiving and loving God without turning to himself. His external self is occupied in worship and his inner self in acquiring virtue. All this is, however, purification of the self and forms the first step. The goal is that

the mystic sloughs off himself entirely and turns to God exclusively. He is then, as if He. This is the *wuṣūl*"[81].

Ghazālī says that one might object that he is interpreting in terms of reason the words of the Sufis that emerge from the states which are beyond the comprehension of reason, and answers: "Nothing is revealed to the mystic which reason considers impossible. He may, however, perceive things which reason cannot comprehend by itself. For instance, the mystic may have the revelation that he would die tomorrow. But he would not claim to have the revelation that God will create tomorrow His own duplicate. It would be more impossible for him to claim that God has made him like Himself, and much more impossible to claim that God has transformed him into Himself, that is, he has become God. For that would mean that, although he is not the Creator of the heavens and the earth, God has made him the creator of the heavens and the earth"[82].

Ghazālī reiterates the same point in the *Mishkāt al-Anwār*:

"After reaching the heaven of reality what all the mystics have said with one voice is that they did not see in existence except the One, the Real. For some of them this is a matter of knowledge, an intuitive realization *('irfān 'ilmī)*. For others this is an experience, a psychological state *(ḥāl wa dhawq)*. Plurality vanishes from their sight altogether, and they are engrossed in pure oneness, losing their intellect in that vision, stunned so much so that they cease to be conscious of everything other than God, even of them-selves. There is nothing for them in existence except God, they become intoxicated (in this vision) and lose their reason. One of them in that state said: 'I am the Real', another said: 'Glory to me, how great I am', and a third said: "There is none in the cloak except God". Such words of the lovers in the state of intoxication are to be shelved rather than related. When intoxication passes off and they are returned to reason which is the balance of God on earth, they realize that this was not real union *(ḥaqīqat al-ittiḥād)*, but a semblance of union *(shibh al-*

ittiḥād). These words are just like the word of a lover who says in the intensity of love: "I am the one whom I love and the one I love is me"[83].

There is nothing in other esoteric writings of Ghazālī to suggest that he ever revised his opinion on the subject.

Notes and References

1. For the life of Ghazālī, see his autobiography. *Al-munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*, English trans. by Montgomery Watt: *The Faith and Practice of Ghazālī*, London 1951. See also al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'īyah*, Beirut, al-Maktab al-Tijāri, Vol.4 pp.101 ff; Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, Vol.I, 463 ff; Ibn al-'Imad *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, Beirut, Maktab al-Tijari, Vol.IX, pp.10-13; Ibn 'Asākir, *Tabyīn Kidhb al-Muftārī*, Damishq, 1347 A.H. pp.291-306;Al-Yafi'ī, *Mir'at al-Jinān*, Beirut, Muwassasat al-'Ālamī li-l-Maṭbū'āt, Vol.3, 176-186; Al-Zubaydī: *Itḥāf al-Sādah al-Muttaqīn bi Sharh Iḥyā 'Ulūm al Dīn* Vol.I; Tash Kubrī Zādah; *Miftāh al-Sa'ādah*, Vol.2, pp. 191-210.
2. Aḥmad Ghazālī, a sufi and popular preacher, took the place of his brother Muḥammad al- Ghazālī at the Nizamiyah College, Baghdad as teacher, when the latter left. He wrote among other works *Risālat al-Ṭayr*, and summarized the *Iḥyā*. He died in 520/1126 in Kazwin.
3. Details about Yusuf Nassāj's life were not available.
4. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Abd Allah al-Juwaynī (d. 477/1084) was the leader of Shafi'ite jurists at Nishapur and a great teacher of Ash'arī theology. After teaching at Nishapur and Baghdad he went to Makkah and lived there for four years, teaching and giving *fatwās*. Then he returned to Nishapur, taught in peace, wrote books and lectured in mosques. Dhahabī says that though he was profound in *fiqh* and *uṣūl*, he had little knowledge of *hadith*. Among his books are: *Al-Irshād, al-Shāmil fi Uṣūl l-Dīn* and *al-'Aqīdah al-Nizāmīyah* in theology, *Al-Burhān fi Uṣūl al-Fiqh* in jurisprudence, *Shifā al-'Alīl fī Bayān ma waqa'a fī l-Tawrāt wa l-Injīl min al-Tabdīl* in comparative religion and *Ghiyāth* al-Umam in the principles of government.
5. Abū Ali al-Farmadī (d. 477.1084), a friend of the great Sufi, Abū Sa'īd Abū l-Khayr, is said to be Ghazālī's

teacher in Sufism (tash Kubri Zādah: *Ma'rifat l-Jinān*, Vol.3, p.189).

6. Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 485/1092), the great Vizir of the Saljuqs, established about 1070 A.D. a number of colleges each called after his name Madrasah Niẓāmīyah in half a dozen big cities of the Caliphate, including Baghdad. He wrote the famous *Siyāsat Nāmah* at the request of his sovereign (Eng. Trans. by Hubert Darkes entitled: *The Book of the Government or Rules for Kings*, London, 1960).
7. Ghazālī: *Al Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*, ed. Dr. 'Abd l-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, Cairo, Maktabat al-Anjalo l-Miṣrīyah, 4th ed. 1964 p.13
8. Ibid, p.17
9. Ibid, opt, cit. .23
10. Ghazālī wrote a number of books in order to refute the doctrines of the Baṭinīs. The most important is the *Faḍā'ih al-Bāṭinīyah* also known as *Al-Mustaẓharī* as the book was dedicated to Caliph Al-Mustaẓhir bi Allah (d. 512/1118) (ed. Dr. Abd al-Raḥmān Badwī, Kuwait, Muwassasah Dār l-Kutub al-Thaqāfīyah). A part of the book with German translation and Introduction has been published by Goldziher under the title, *Streitschrift des Chazali gegen die Batinijah Sekte*, Leiden Brill, 1961. Ghazālī's other works on the subject are: *Ḥujjat al-Ḥaqq*, *Mafṣal al-Khilāf* and *al-Darj. Al-Qisṭās al-Mustaqīm* also refers to the Bāṭinīyah (see *al-Munqidh*, opt. cit. p.57) Of these books only the *Faḍā'ih*, the *Mafṣal* and the *Qisṭas* have survived (see Badwi: *Muwallafāt al-Ghazālī*, pp.132-134).
11. Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥālith b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), originally from Basrah, was the leader of Sufis at Baghdād. He wrote many books on the Sufī way of self-purification; of these the most important is *Al-Ri'āyah li Ḥuqūq Allah*.
12. Abū Ṭālib Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. 'Atīyah al-Hārithī al al-Makkī (d.386/996) was from al-Jabal but later settled at

Makkah. He subjected himself to hard sufi practices, lived on leaves of the trees and exerted himself in devotions. He studied with the people of Ḥadith and the Sufis of his day, delivered sermons in mosques, and wrote books. His best known work is *Qūt al-Qulūb*. In the later part of his life which he passed at Baghdad, people took offence at some of his speeches and shunned him. (See Ibn Khallikān: *Wafayāt l-A'yān*, Vol.2, p.297).

13. Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, opt. cit. p.25. Abū Bakr ibn 'Arabi says that he has seen more than 400 students in Ghazālī's classess (Ibn al-'Imād: *Shadharāt*, opt. cit. Vol.4, p.13)
14. Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, p.64
15. Yāfi'i, *Mir'at al-Jinān*, Beirut, Vol.3, p.185; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*, Beirut, Vol.4, p.13
16. Watt, Montgomery: *The Muslim Intellectual*, Edinberg, 1963, p.119. The chronology of Ghazālī's writings has been worked out by various writers such as P.Bouyges, L. Massignon, Asin Palacious, Montgomery Watt and George Hourani; of these the last one is more elaborate and more correct.
17. Ghazālī: *Kitāb al-Arba'īn fi Uṣūl l-Dīn*, Cairo, p.18
18. Ghazālī: *Iḥyā 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Dar Iḥyā al-Kutub al-Arabiyah, Cairo, Vol.4 pp.247,254 and Vol.1, p.4
19. Ibn Ṭufayl: *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, ed. Aḥmad Amin, Cairo, Dar l-Ma'ārif, 1966, p.59
20. Ibn Rushd: *Al-Kashf 'an Minhāj al-Adillah*, Cairo, Maktabat al-Anjalo, 1955, p.183
21. Ibn Taymīyah: *Kitāb al-Radd 'ala l-Manṭiqīn*, Beirut, Dar al-Ma'ārif, p.511
22. Ghazālī: *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, ed. Dr. Abul l-'Alā Afifi, Cairo, al-Dar al-Qawmiyah, p.56
23. Badwī, *Muwallafāt al-Ghazālī*, opt. cit. p.196
24. Dr. Sulaymān Dunyā: *Al-Ḥaqīqah 'ind al-Ghazālī*, Cairo, Dar al-Ma'ārif, 1965, pp.105-119
25. In the *Ma'ārij al-Quds* Ghazālī discusses at length three characteristic functions of prophecy pertaining to the three faculties of the Prophet: his imagination and

practical reason *(al-takhayyul wa l-'aql al-'amalī)*, theoretical reason *(al-'aql al-nazarī)*, and the soul *(al-nafs)*. In the *Munqidh* and the *Mishkāt* he mentions all the three characteristics of prophecy but discusses only one, namely, the second.

26. Badawī: *Muwallafāt al-Ghazālī*, chapter 3 and 4 in particular.
27. Ghazālī: *Al-Iqtiṣād fi l-I'tiqād*, ed. Dr. 'Ādil l-Awwā, Cairo, 1969, p.35
28. Ibid, p.94
29. Ibid, p.101-106
30. Ibid, p.107
31. Ibid, p.167
32. Ibid, p.150
33. Ghazālī: *Tahāfut al-Falāsafah*, see the 6th question concerning attributes
34. Ghazālī: *Al-Iqtṣād*, opt. cit. pp.152-53
35. Ibid, p.166
36. Ibid, p.167
37. Ibid, p.126
38. Ibid, p.107
39. Ghazālī, *Iḥyā 'Ulum al-Dīn*, opt. cit. Vol.1, p.109
40. Ibid, Vol.4, pp.244-5
41. Ibid, Vol.4, p.250
42. Ghazālī: *Al-Iqtiṣād*, opt. cit. p. 121
43. Ghazālī: *Iḥyā*, opt. cit. Vol.4, pp.240ff
44. Ibid, Vol.4, p.242
45. Ibid, Vol.4, p.250
46. Ibid, Vol.4, p.240
47. Ghazālī: *Iḥyā*, opt. cit, Vol.4, p.240
48. Ibid, Vol.4, p.241
49. Ibid, Vol.4, p.240
50. Ibid, Vol.4, p.241
51. Ibid, Vol.4, p.84
52. Ibid, Vol.4, p.319
53. Ghazālī: *Al-Maqṣad al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Asmā Allāh al-Ḥusnā*, Cairo, Maktabat al-Jundi, p.45

54. Ghazālī: *Iḥyā*, Vol.4, p.313
55. Ghazālī: *Al-Maqṣad al-Asnā*, opt. cit. p.45
56. Ibid, p.155
57. Ibid, p.155-56
58. Ghazālī: *Iḥyā*, Vol.4, p.83
59. Ghazālī: *Al-Maqṣad al-Asnā*, p.119
60. Al-Qur'ān: 40:16
61. Ghazālī: *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, ed. Dr. Abu l-'Alā Afīfī, Cairo, 1964, pp.55-56
62. For Ibn 'Arabī's views see the chapter on him. See also Dr. Abu l-'Alā 'Afīfī: *The Mystical Philosophy of Ibnul 'Arabī*, Ashraf publication, Lahore.
63. By emanation here I do not mean emanation in the Plotinian sense. I rather mean it in the sense in which Shāh Walīy Allāh calls the Universal Existence *(al-Wujūd al-Munbasiṭ)* an emanation of God (see his *Tafhīmat*, India, Vol.2, pp.28-29 and Vol.1, pp.167-167; his *Lamḥāt*, ed. Ghulam Mustafa Qasimi Hyderabad, Pakistan pp.22; his *Al-Khayr al-Kathīr* (India) pp.20-21; his *Al-Budūr al-Bāzighah* (India), p.11; see also our chapter on Shāh Walīy Allāh.
64. For this highly original concept see our chapter on Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī.
65. Ghazālī: *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, opt. cit. p.60
66. Ibid, p.14
67. Ibid, p.14
68. Ibid, p.16
69. 'I am the Real' was said by Hallāj; 'Glory be to me, how great I am' by Abū Yazīd, and 'There is none in the robe except God' by Abū Sa'id Abu l-Khayr.
70. Ghazālī: *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, pp.57-58
71. Ibid, pp.91-92
72. Ghazālī uses the soul-body analogy to explain Unity in the *Iḥyā*, Vol.4, p.241
73. Ghazālī: *Ma'ārij al-Quds fī Madārij Ma'rifat a-Nafs*, Cairo, Al-Maktabat al-Kubra, pp.141, 148

74. For a discussion of various interpretations of Ghazālī's concept of *Muṭā'* see, Dr. Abul l-'Alā Afīfī's Introduction to his edition of *Mishkāt al-Anwār* (pp.25-26). He offers his own view (pp.25-31) very much on the line that has been taken here. I wonder why in working out his view, he does not refer to the *Ma'ārij*.
75. Al-Qur'ān: 42:51
76. Ghazālī, *Ma'ārij al-Quds*, opt. cit. pp.151-53
77. Ghazālī, *Ma'ārij al-Quds*, p.55
78. Ibid, p.42
79. Abu l-Qāsim 'Alī al-Gurgānī, a renowned Sufi of Iran has been mentioned by Hujwīrī (d. 465/1072). Hujwirī says that he met him at Tus, learned from him many things and had discourses with him (see his *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, ed. Zhukovsky, Tehran, p.55). He categorises him with Abu Sa'īd Abu l-Khayr and Abu l-'Abbās Shaqqānī who admired Ḥallāj (see p.189)
80. Ghazālī, *Al-Maqṣad al-Asnā*, opt. cit. pp.144-151
81. Ibid, p.151
82. Ibid, p.151
83. Ghazālī, *Mishkāt*, p.57

Ibn 'Arabī: Doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*

The first ṣūfī to construct a comprehensive philosophical doctrine on the basis of his unitive experience was the great Spanish ṣūfī Ibn 'Arabī. Commonly this doctrine is known as *waḥdat al-wujūd*, but it is also called *tawḥīd wujūdī*, or simply *tawḥīd*. Ibn 'Arabī worked out various concepts of this doctrine so thoroughly and argued them with such force that the doctrine won general acceptance in ṣūfī circles. The contemplatives among them regarded it the supreme exposition of ṣūfī theosophy and hailed Ibn 'Arabī as *al-Shaykh al-Akbar*, Doctor Maximus. They came out with summaries of his *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, the most comprehensive and elaborate exposition of his ideas, and wrote several commentaries on his *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, the most concise and candid statement of his philosophy. Their poets rendered his ideas in the sweet language of poetry, and chanted them in ecstasy. The ṣūfīs that were more practical-minded approved of the doctrine tacitly, and, excepting a few, hardly voiced any criticism. Though some changes were introduced into the doctrine later and different versions were brought out, the doctrine dominated sufism in the east as well as the west, and in spite of the criticism of the theologians and traditionists, maintained its sway over the Islamic world for four hundred years.

Life

Muḥīy 'l-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad Ibn 'Arabī[1] was born at Murcia in the south-east region of Islamic Spain on 27th Ramaḍān 560 AH/ 7th August 1165 CE in a well-to-do family that claimed descent from the

famous Arab tribe of Ṭayy. When he was eight years old his family moved to Seville which they adopted as their permanent home. Ibn 'Arabī received his formal education, learned the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth* and Arabic literature. In *fiqh* he was trained in the *Ẓāhirī* tradition. Philosophy was not much liked by people in Spain, hence the amazing knowledge of various schools of philosophy, rationalistic and gnostic, Greek and Roman, beside that of his Muslim predecessors which Ibn 'Arabī displays in his writings must have been the result of years of sustained self-study.

Ibn 'Arabī's father was a pious ṣūfī, and two of his uncles were known for their severe ascetic practices. Seville, his home till 590/1174, was the seat of some well-known ṣūfīs such as Ibn Barrajān (d. 536/1141) and Abū Madyan[2] (d. 598/1193) and his disciple Abū Ya'qub al-Qaysī (d. 576/1280), one of the fifty ṣūfīs whom Ibn 'Arabī counts as his teachers. However, the incident that proved the turning point for him to Sufism was the vision that he had in the course of a prolonged illness in early twenties. This was the beginning of a series of visionary experiences which Ibn 'Arabī delights to mention in his writings.

Ibn 'Arabī was a great traveller; for ten years he kept on moving from one city to another in Spain and North Africa and meeting eminent ṣūfīs and scholars. At Cordova he met the great philosopher Ibn Rushd who admired his mystical and intellectual talents. At Almeria he met some direct disciples of the famous ṣūfī saint Ibn al-'Arīf (d. 536/1141) like Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ghazālī and Abū 'l-Rabī' al-Khafīf. In 590/1195 he visited Tunis and studied the *Khal' al-Na'layn* of Ibn Qasīy with the latter's son, and is said to have written a commentary on it. The following year he visited Fez where he wrote his *Kitāb al-Isrā'*. In 594/1199 he returned to Spain and attended the funeral of Ibn Rushd at Cordova.

But Spain was not a suitable place for him to live and develop his ideas which had already started taking shape. Nor

was North Africa a better place. Ibn Barrajān was put in prison till he died, and Ibn al-'Arīf was poisoned.

Ibn 'Arabī therefore decided to leave Spain and go to the East. Travelling through North Africa and staying for some time in Egypt he arrived at Makkah in 598/1201, performed *ḥajj* and started writing his *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*. It is here also that he composed his odes entitled *Tarjumān al-Ashwāq* which he addressed to 'Ayn al-Shams Niẓām, the beautiful daughter of an Iṣfahānī resident. He also met here Majd al-Dīn Isḥāq, the father of his famous and life long disciple Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, who brought him to Qūniyah in 601/1204. From his base in Qūniyah he visited Makkah the second time, then Baghdad where he met the great Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī, and finally Aleppo where he wrote a commentary on his *Tarjumān al-Ashwāq* to explain the real mystical import of its odes and silence public criticism. In 612/1216 he moved to Malatya where he passed the next fifteen years, and in 627/1230 went to Damascus where he lived till the end of his life. During these years he completed and revised the *Futūhāt Makkīyah* and wrote his last and most famous work, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. He died on 20th Rabī' al-Thānī 638/16th November 1240 in the house of his friend Qāḍī Muḥīy 'l-Dīn Abu 'l-Zakī and was buried on the slopes of Mt. Qāsiyūn. Ibn 'Arabī married several women and might have had many children, but we only know of his two sons Muḥammad (d. 656/1258) and 'Imād al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh (d. 667/1269).

Ibn 'Arabī was a very prolific writer. Brockelmann lists 239 of his works, Osman Yahya mentions 846, but there is little doubt that he composed not less than 400 books. For our purpose, however, the *Fuṣūṣ* and the *Futūḥāt* and at a secondary level the treatises published by H.S. Nyberg and those published from Hyderabad are sufficient to form a clear view of his main ideas. In the following pages we shall state the basic ideas of his doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, leaving out his view on mystical experience and *kashf* for later section. In theosophy Ibn 'Arabī's contribution is superb, next to none, but

in practical Sufism he hardly made any contribution worth mentioning. His contemporary Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234) or his most eminent predecessor Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166), on the contrary, were greater figures in the field. They were founders of great Ṣūfī orders that are popular till today. A Ṣūfī *ṭarīqah*, called *Akbarīyah* after Ibn 'Arabī's title, al-Shaykh al-Akbar, is mentioned in the books,[3] but it drew only a few adherents in the beginning and almost disappeared later.

We shall now move to a systematic exposition of Ibn 'Arabī's philosophy of *waḥdat al-wujūd*.

Being (*Wujūd*)

We would begin the exposition with a discussion of *wujūd*. It may either mean that which is, being in reality, or the concept of *wujūd*. In the latter sense *wujūd* is often referred to as *al-wujūd al-maṣdarī* and is regarded by all as an abstract idea *(amr intizā'ī)* devoid of reality.

Wujūd in reality refers to three categories of being. The first category comprises concrete beings that exist out there in any one of the three worlds: first, the ordinary world of physical bodies *('ālam al-ajsād)* which is given in sense perception; second, the world of spirits *('ālam al-arwāḥ)* apprehended by the intellect; and third the world intermediate between the first two in which corporeal beings and pure spirits appear in the form of images, and abstract ideas appear in the form of material symbols. This image-symbol world *('ālam al-mithāl)* is given in imagination but its images and symbols are not mere creations of fancy as ordinary images are. They are veritable realities existing independently of our minds[4].

The second category of real beings consists of universals such as knowledge, life, animality, humanity[5] (or man as such), etc. Like Plato's ideas, Ibn 'Arabī's universals exist in an ideal world of their own which he identifies, as Philo (d. 45-50 CE) and Plotinus (d. 270 CE) did centuries ago, with the Divine Mind

or Knowledge *(ḥaḍrat al-'ilm)*. In addition to the universals, Ibn 'Arabī also believes in the existence of individual ideas, that is, of a particular cat or man,[6] as Plotinus did.

Generally, Ibn 'Arabī uses *thubūt* (subsistence) to characterize the being of ideal realities, and *wujūd* to characterize the being of concrete realities. But since *wujūd* refers in general to all that is real, whether concrete or ideal, Ibn 'Arabī uses qualifying words in order to distinguish between the two modes of *wujūd*. For the concrete he uses terms like *al-wujūd al-'ayni* (concrete existence) and *al-wujūd al-ẓāhir* or *ẓāhir al-wujūd* (phenomenal existence or external existence), and for the ideal he uses words like *al-wujūd al-'ilmī* or *al-wujūd al-'aqlī*[7] (ideal being) and *bāṭin al-wujūd* (occult being). Subsistence and existence are two modes of *wujūd*. They differ in respect to their properties but not in respect to reality.

Wujūd in reality refers, thirdly, to Being as such *(al-wujūd al-maḥḍ)* or Being without qualification whatsoever *(lā bi shart shay')* as later *wujūdī* use the term. Ibn 'Arabī and other *wujūdīs* refer to being as such as Absolute Being *(al-Wujūd al-Muṭlaq)* by which they do not understand the absolute which is in opposition to the relative but the absolutely undifferentiated and indeterminate Being which is above all considerations and oppositions[8]. We cannot speak of Being as such except in negative terms[9]. The only positive thing that we can say of it is that it is *wujūd* (being/existence). But in saying that we do not predicate existence to some essence *(dhāt)* which is other than existence. Existence *(wujūd)* is not a predicate *(ṣifat)* and Being as such is not an essence that exists, it is Existence[10]. Everything that exists whether universal or particular, ideal or concrete is a form of Being as such. But by manifesting in these forms Being does not divide itself; it does not become many; it remains One as ever. Neither does it suffer a change in degree. It is one and the same without any variation or division[11].

Being as such is not given in the ordinary modes of experience; what we have in perception, imagination or reason is its determinate forms. Reason at best may suggest its possibility, but can never establish it. Rational arguments have been advanced in support of Being as such as well as in refutation, but they are, as Jāmī says, equally inconclusive and doubtful, the only sure guarantee, he thinks, is mystical experience. But does mystic experience really reveal Being as such, or is it an inference from this experience? Jāmī believes that the experience of the mystics which has been described in their books suggests the existence of the Absolute Being which comprehends both the ideal and the concrete forms and embraces all mental and external beings[12]. On the other hand, it is said time and again by Ibn 'Arabī and others that Being as such is absolute mystery *(al-ghayb al-muṭlaq)* and utterly unknowable[13].

Being as such is the essence *(dhāt)* of God[14]. This is the basic postulate of the *wujūdī* theology. That it is a postulate and not a fact of mystic experience follows from the *wujūdī* belief that the essence of God is above any experience. Ibn 'Arabī writes: "The Absolute in its necessary Essence is beyond mystic perception *(dhawq)* and vision *(shuhūd)*"[15].

Self-manifestation (*Tajallī*)

Beings emerge from Being as such, multiplicity comes out from absolute unity. The process by which this happens is characterized as *ta'ayyun* or self-determination of Being. In the process Being as such loses its former absolutness, it is no more above distinction. But Ibn 'Arabī and others still call it Absolute Being *(al-Wujūd al-Muṭlaq)* by which terms they now mean the Absolute which is opposed to the relative. In this sense they usually call it the Absolute *(al-Ḥaqq)* and distinguish it from *al-khalq* or the world of determinate forms. In the following pages we shall use the Absolute in the sense of *al-Ḥaqq* unless specified otherwise.

The concept of self-determination as explained by Ibn 'Arabī and others means that the forms in which the Absolute determines itself are its own essential modes *(shu'ūn dhātīyah)*. Determination is, therefore, a process of self-differentiation *(tamayyuz)*. In respect to their origin the forms are one with the Absolute whose modes they are, but as determinate forms they are different from the Absolute. But they are by no means so many beings existing in themselves. There is One Essence *(Dhāt Wāḥidah)*[16] which alone appears in multiple forms, or One Substance *(al-Jawhar al-Waḥīd)* which is qualified by a plurality of accidents *(a'rāḍ)*. By appearing in a variety of forms, however, the Absolute does not divide or suffer any change. For it is not the case that a part of the Absolute appears in one being and another part in some other being. Nor is the case that there is more of it in one form and less in another. The Absolute appears in all forms without suffering any division or diminution[17].

Differentiation gives rise to relations and predications. As a result, the unknown comes to be known. These two aspects, the procession of beings from within the Absolute and the self-revelation of the Absolute in knowledge in the process are beautifully suggested by the metaphor of *tajallī*[18], which literally means the self-unveiling of a luminous object. Ibn 'Arabī has adopted the word *tajallī* in order to distinguish his system from the emanation *(ṣudūr)* of the philosophers, on the one hand, and the creation *(khalq)* of the theologians, on the other.

Though many things are common between the *wujūdī* concept of *tajallī* and the Plotinian concept of emanation and as such Ibn 'Arabī feels free to use neo-Platonic terms like effulgence *(fayḍān)* and emanation *(ṣudūr)*, the difference between the two systems is fundamental. According to Plotinus, the universe is a system of beings that proceed in a series from an ultimate source, the One, which lies outside the series, and is related to them as their First Cause. But according to Ibn 'Arabī the Absolute is not an external and remote cause

of the universe but its immediate ground and the real subject of all that exists. Each member of the series in the neo-Platonic system is a separate entity or *'ayn* which proceeds from its antecedent as an effect proceeds from an external cause. In the *wujūdī* system, on the other hand, the world is not a plurality of beings. There is just One Being there which appears here in this form and there in that form. Causality in the strict sense has no place in Ibn 'Arabī's system, because the same thing cannot be its own cause. Both Plotinus and Ibn 'Arabī talk of grades of being *(marātib al-wujūd)*. But here again their difference is significant. In Plotinus the procession of beings from the One is like the emanation of a ray of light which becomes increasingly dim as it moves away from the source till it fades out in darkness which Plotinus identifies with matter or non-being. Hence in the neo-Platonian system there are in reality different grades of being. In Ibn 'Arbī's system, on the other hand, there are, strictly speaking, no grades of being, for the simple reason that there are no beings in plural. All that Ibn 'Arabī has is a graded manifestation of One Being. And since one and the same Being cannot be said to be higher or lower than itself, in reality there is no higher or lower being in his system. Ibn 'Arabī also speaks of the descent *(tanazzul)* of Being. But his concept of descent does not refer to beings as beings as it does in the neo-Platonic system; rather it refers to the forms of the manifestation of just One Being. Emanation is truly a progressive devolution of Being because it is opposed by non-being. This is not the case in *tajallī*. Here there is no non-being or matter to oppose the manifestation of Being. In the system of *tajallī* that which is the ground of forms is also the principle of their differentiation and individuation. In neo-Platonism, on the other hand, the principle of difference or plurality is not Being itself but matter or non-being[19].

Creation *(khalq)* as explained by the theologians of Islam implies the notion of an external cause conceived as will. But *tajallī* implies the notion of the Ground of Being rather than a Personal Cause. The difference between the two concepts is fundamental. It is quite natural, therefore, for Ibn 'Arabī to dub

the theologians as 'the people of cause' *(aṣḥāb al-'illah)*[20]. However, he uses the term *khalq* (creation) as he uses the term *ṣudūr* (emanation). The reason is quite obviously religious. We shall see how he interprets *khalq* to suit his doctrine of One Being.

Subsisting Entities (*A'yān Thābitah*)

Being manifests first in ideal forms *(al-ṣuwar al-'ilmīyah)*, this is the ideal epiphany *(tajallī 'ilmī)* of Being. It manifests next in concrete forms, this is the existential epiphany of Being *(tajallī wujūdī)*. Using the neo-Platonic language Ibn 'Arabī calls the former *al-fayḍ al-aqdas* (the most holy emanation), and the latter *al-fayḍ al-muqaddas* (the holy emanation of Being).

Ibn 'Arabī's common term for the ideal forms is *a'yān thābitah*, which signifies that the ideal forms are the essences *(a'yān)* of things that subsist *(thābitah)* in the mind of God *(ḥaḍrat al-'ilm)*. They are the eternal prototypes of things in God's knowledge[21]. This is, however, one aspect. The other aspect is that the ideal forms are the eternal modes of the divine Essence *(shu'ūn dhātīyah)* inherent in the Essence and absolutely one with it[22]. But as ideas and as essential modes of God they are not two different things; they are rather two aspects of one and the same reality. That which constitutes the essence of things and is the object of God's thought is a mode of His own essence. In this conception of the ideal forms Ibn 'Arabī agrees with Plotinus rather than Philo who probably distinguished between God's thought and His essential modes.

The ideal forms subsist (*thābit*) rather than exist. This means, first, that they are potentialities[23] which are yet to be realized or passivities which shall be activised in existence. 'Existence' as Shāh Walī Allāh (d. 1176/1762) who agrees with Ibn 'Arabī on this point puts 'is subsistence in action'[24]. It means, secondly, that the ideal forms *(a'yān thābitah)* subsist eternally and never exist. This is the meaning of Ibn 'Arabī's

famous statement that "the *a'yān* never get the smell of existence *(wujūd)*"[25]. As his commentators explain the statement it means much more than the obvious fact that the ideal forms subsist rather than exist. It means that they continue in the state of subsistence for ever; subsistence is their essential and inalienable attribute. It is impossible for the *a'yān thābitah* to enter into the realm of existence at any time[26].

This point is expressed by Ibn 'Arabī in a different way. The *a'yān*, he says, are *ma'dūm* (non-existent), and *'adam* (non-existence) is their necessary attribute[27]. However, it would be wrong to render *ma'dūm* in this context as non-being because subsistence *(thubūt)* is a mode of being and not non-being. Ibn 'Arabī distinguishes between an absolute non-being *(al-'adam al-muṭlaq)* and a relative non-being *(al-'adam al-iḍāfī)*[28]. To say that A is absolutely non-existent means that it is impossible for A to exist in any one of the worlds described by Ibn 'Arabī; in other words, A is absolutely inconceivable. A thing is relatively *ma'dūm* (non-existent) means that it does not exist in a particular world in whose reference it is non-existent though it exists in another world in whose relation it is existent. The *a'yān thābitah* are non-existent in the relative sense, they do not exist in the outer world although they exist in the ideal world.

Since the *a'yān* are potentialities that are yet to be realized in existence, Ibn 'Arabī calls them possible existence *(al-wujūd al-mumkin)*. But in reality the *a'yān* are necessary beings, because whatever is there in subsistence must necessarily exist. In fact there is nothing possible[29]: there is either the necessary in itself which is God, or necessary by God which is the world, and what does not belong to these two categories is inconceivable *(muḥāl)* or absolutely non-existent *(ma'dūm muṭlaq)*.

The *a'yān* are eternal, they co-exist with God eternally as inherent determinations of his Essence. Ibn 'Arabī writes:

> The object in the state of non-existence is not subsequent to the eternity *(azal)* that is of the Real *(al-Ḥaqq)*. The

eternity which is necessary for the Real is also necessary for the non-existence of the object and its subsistence and individuation in the Real[30]. Since the *a'yān* are co-eternal with God as His essential modes and known to Him from eternity they are uncreated *(ghayr mukhtara')*[31].

The *a'yān* are in essence universals that have or may have existence out there in future. There are simple *(basīṭ)*[32] universals such as knowledge and power, blackness and whiteness, courage and cowardice, motion and rest. There are also complex universals such as animality, humanity and the like. But these complex universals are mere collectivities of unrelated simple universals. For the world of subsistence is a world of simple entities *(basā'iṭ)*, and complex entities are only to be found in the world of existence. "The whole of subsistence", Ibn 'Arabī says, "is simple *(basīṭ)* and discreet *(mufrad)*, here nothing subsists by any thing else. In existence, on the contrary, there is nothing that is not complex, a subject and an attribute"[33]. The reason behind this assertion is that relations in the view of Ibn 'Arabī are not part of the existential order and hence they can have no place in subsistence either. Relations have no *a'yān*,[34] that is, they have no footing in reality. This is a fundamental principle and applies to all kinds of relations: temporal like before and after, spatial like above and below, quantitative like more or less, and qualitative like higher and lower, better and worse. That is why *a'yān*[35] have no sequence in themselves, they co-exist from eternity. Nor is there a relation of locus *(maḥall)* and some thing that resides in the locus[36]. Each *'ayn* is infinite *(ghayr mutanāhī)* and simple *(basīṭ)* for there are no quantitative limitations or qualitative distinctions in it.

Ibn 'Arabī and his school believes that along with the universals the ideal world also contains ideas (*a'yān*) of individual beings and persons[37]. Many considerations might have led Ibn 'Arabī to this belief. One, we would like to point out here is that people like Plato who believe in the reality of universal forms invoke the concept of non-being or matter to

account for individuals. To a monist like Ibn 'Arabī who sees in this device a reification of non-being and a commitment to a sort of dualism, this course is not open. He therefore posits individualities in the ideal world itself. He might have been conscious of the difficulties of this move, and that may be the reason why his reference to individual *a'yān* is not so clear. His followers are, however, quite explicit. Perhaps they are not conscious of the difficulties of which I will mention only two here. First, an individual idea (*'ayn*) cannot constitute of universals like power, knowledge, courage, etc. as unqualified; it must contain them with all particular quantitative and qualitative specifications. But this is not possible unless the original idea that the universals are infinite and admit of no distinction is qualified. Secondly, each idea as conceived by Ibn 'Arabī is a isolated monad, standing alone without any relation with the other idea. For, in substance there is no relation, there is no subject and predicate, no substance and accident. Devoid of these relations there can be no real individual idea; it would be at best a jumble of isolated universals. Ibn 'Arabī's denial of objective reality to all relations indiscriminately makes individual ideas impossible.

The idea (*'ayn*) is much more than the ideal nature of an individual. It is also more than what makes up an individual at a particular moment in his history. It contains each and every thing he would ever have, and each and every change he would ever undergo. It contains all his knowledge and belief, all his acts and experiences, all his feelings and emotions[38]. It is his entire life history put on a tape in advance. Ibn 'Arabī believes that nothing comes into existence which is not there in subsistence[39]. This principle leads him to posit in the *'ayn* all that is in the life of an individual at any moment.

Action is a prerogative of an existing being it marks the fundamental difference between existence and subsistence. But that difference seems to vanish when Ibn 'Arabī invests the ideas (*a'yān*) with the power of hearing the creative word

"Be"! *(kun)* of God, and the power of response to the Divine command, as we shall see later.

Attributes and Names of God

With the differentiation of Being in subsistents and later in existents all kinds of relations emerge between the Absolute and its determinate forms, and these relations give rise to various attributes *(ṣifāt)* for the Absolute like knowledge, creation and eternity, and to names *(asmā')* like Knower, Creator and Eternal. Qualified with all the attributes, essential and existential, the Absolute is what religion, according to Ibn 'Arabī, calls Allāh or God. Ibn 'Arabī's concept of Divine names and attributes is dependent on the differentiation of Being in relative forms, and can best be understood in relation to the theological thought in Islam on that issue.

Theologians had classified Divine names into various categories according as they refer to action (e.g. Creator), relation (e.g. King and Lord), negation (e.g. Eternal and Holy) and those which convey some positive meaning (e.g. Knowing and Powerful). The last category of names were in particular the object of controversy between them. Naẓẓām (d. ca. 230/845), a noted Mu'tazalite theologian, understood these attributes of meaning, as they were generally called, in a negative sense. For him to say, for instance, that God is Knowing is to assert the existence of God and negate ignorance for Him, or to say that God is Powerful is to assert His existence and negate impotency for Him. Knowledge and power are not positive qualities *(ṣifāt)* but negative appellations[40] *(wasf)* by which one chooses to describe God. For the majority of the Mu'tazilah, however, these attributes had a positive import. But they did not regard them as real qualities existing in the Divine essence. They, however, formulated their views in different ways. The most common way was to say that God knows by His essence *(bi-dhātihi)* and not by a quality of knowledge, and acts by His essence and not by a quality of power, and so on[41]. His essence is self-sufficient

and there is no need to posit the existence of qualities in addition to it. The other way which Abu 'l-Hudhayl (d. 226/841) adopted was to say that God knows by a knowledge which is His essence and does by a power which is His essence[42]. The difference between the two formulations is significant. The former denies qualities altogether and regards them merely as subjective descriptions *(waṣf)* of the Essence. But the latter concedes some place for the qualities, for it says that God knows by a knowledge and does by a power. However, it is not prepared to differentiate them from the Essence.

Abū Hāshim (d. 321/933) took a somewhat more realistic view of God's names by treating them as states *(aḥwāl)*. In his opinion to say that God is Knowing or Powerful is to describe a particular state *(ḥāl)* of the Divine essence *viz.*, his knowingness *('ālimīyah)* or powerfulness *(qādirīyah)*[43]. States are in a sense one with the Essence, but in another sense they are different from the Essence. Ontologically, states are not existing realities in the Essence as qualities are, but they are not absolutely non-existent either, because they are not mere subjective descriptions. They exist as well as do not exist (*lā mawjūdah wa lā ma'dūmah*).

The Ash'arites were not satisfied with this half-way realism of Abū Hāshim. They were unhappy particularly with the concept of states as existing non-existents, which was in their view either a contradiction in terms or suggested a peculiar mode of reality which they were not prepared to recognize. Some of them, however, were intrigued by the concept. Al-Bāqillānī (d. 404/1013), for instance, adopted it after some modification[44], and al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085) played with it for some time, though in the last, al-Shāhrastānī (d. 548/1153) says, gave it up[45]. We have already seen how Ghazālī's view on the issue underwent a change. The majority of the Ash'arite theologians, however, continued to hold the original position that the attributes of meaning have an

existence in the Essence over and above the Essence in a way that they are different from the Essence as well as one with it.

Ibn 'Arabī could not accept the view of the Ash'arite theologians because it implied in his view a plurality of beings. But he did not also want to deny objectivity to attributes altogether as the majority of the Mu'tazilah and in a sense Abu'l-Hudhayl did. Abū Hāshim's concept of states *(aḥwāl)* fascinated him. He took it and combined it with his doctrine of one Being, and came out with the idea that the names of God are mere relations. He developed his argument as follows:

> The states are neither existent nor non-existent. That is, they have no real footing *('ayn)* in existence because they are relations *(nisab)*; but, on the other hand, they are not non-existent, because they give rise to predicates. The one by whom *'ilm* (knowledge) subsists is called *'alīm* (knower) which is a state. The *'alīm* (knower) is an essence *(dhāt)* qualified with *'ilm* (knowing). He is neither simply an essence nor simply *'ilm* (knowledge). But there is *'ilm* (knowledge) or the essence by which knowledge subsists. Therefore, his being an *'alīm* (knower), is a state of his essence in virtue of being qualified with this meaning *(ma'nā)*. This gives rise to the predication of *'ilm* (knowing) to him on account of which he is called knower[46].

The argument presented in this passage owes its plausibility to a play on the word *'ilm*. At one place Ibn 'Arabī uses *'ilm* in the sense of the act of knowing which is a relation and at another place he uses it in the sense of the idea of knowledge, or the ideal reality of knowledge which is referred to here in the passage as 'meaning' and with which the Essence is said to be qualified not in the ordinary sense of qualification but in the sense in which the Indeterminate Being is qualified with its determinate forms. What he wants to say is that the Divine names like Knower, Powerful and Merciful refer to the states of the Absolute Being which in reality are nothing but predicates that arise from the relation of the Absolute Being

with the subsisting realities of knowledge, power, and mercy that are the ideal determinations of the Divine Essence. In the *Futūḥāt* he states the point more clearly: "These states *(aḥwāl)* are the predicates caused by 'intelligible meanings' *(aḥkām al-ma'ānī al-ma'qūlah)* or they are relations, say whatever you like"[47]. Thus in Ibn 'Arabī's view all the names of God, and not only those which the theologians have called relations, are without exception mere relations, or, to be more precise, predicates caused by relations. This is the general view of attributes and names which Ibn 'Arabī states time and again in his various books. In the *Fuṣūṣ*, for instance, he writes: "The *ṣifāt* (attributes) are relations and attributions *(nisab wa iḍāfāt)* between the objects qualified by them and their intelligible realities"[48]. And "the Divine names are relations and attributions *(nisab wa iḍāfāt)*"[49].

It follows from this doctrine that the attributes or names of God which Ibn 'Arabī uses interchangably are distinct from His Essence only as states of the latter while they are one with it in existence. They do not have an existence over and above the Essence as the Ashā'irah believe. The names are the named *(al-musammā)*, says Ibn 'Arabī. They differ from the latter in their connotation only. This is also true between the names themselves. They are in existence one with each other as they are one with the Essence and differ from each other in what they mean.

Knowledge of God

According to Ibn 'Arabī, God's knowledge of things is dependent on things and determined by them. His knowledge is like any other knowledge, it neither affects its object nor creates it. Ibn 'Arabī does not agree with the view of Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) and Ibn Sinā (d. 428/1037) that God's knowledge of things is sufficient to create them. It is true that God knows things before they come into existence, but His knowledge does not bring them into existence. Ibn 'Arabī thinks that for the creation of things it is necessary to posit a

will in God as the theologians do, although he interprets it in a different way. In his view God's knowledge is completely passive. Things subsist in God from eternity as His essential modes, and come into existence as they are in subsistence. He only becomes aware of them without His awareness affecting them in any sense. But His awareness is not subsequent to the objects because the differentiation of things in God and His awareness of them are simultaneous. However, things in subsistence have a priority of status *(fi'l-martabah)*[50] over God's knowledge of them; for knowledge is a relation, and as such is dependent upon its object. Ibn 'Arabī puts the point in his characteristic way: "Possible objects bestow upon God the knowledge of their being"[51].

People have taken objection to this view on the ground that it subjects God's knowledge to the objects. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 832/1428) whose philosophy owes much to Ibn 'Arabī and who has been said to have written a commentary on the *Futūḥāt* of Ibn 'Arabī comments on this view as follows:

> Ibn 'Arabī says that objects bestow upon God the knowledge of themselves... but he fails to see that the objects have only what God knows of them with a knowledge total, original and essential before bringing them into ideal or concrete existence. For the objects do not have a determination in the ideal realm except as a result of what God knows of them and not as a result of some thing in themselves[52].

Jīlī does not subscribe to Ibn 'Arabī's relational view of attributes. In his view God has some essential attributes, and knowledge is one of them and is determinative of its objects. He says: "Knowledge is an essential and eternal attribute, and God's knowledge of Himself and His knowledge of things is one knowledge, indivisible and non-different"[53].

Ibn 'Arabī certainly does not think that knowledge is an essential attribute independent and determinative of its object, but he would agree with Jīlī in that God's self-knowledge is one with His knowledge of things. In the *Futūḥāt* he clearly

states that "God's knowledge of Himself is His knowledge of the world"[54]. To the charge of subjection he would answer: "This is a wonder that there are beings there which aquaint you with themselves yet they know of themselves only through you. The possibles, for example, aquaint God of themselves yet none of them knows itself except through God. In other words, although apparently things aquaint God with themselves it is God who aquaints Himself with them through them"[55].

The doctrine that God's knowledge of things is dependent on things faces difficulty in accounting for His knowledge of the sequence in which things appear in existence. For being a relation, sequence can have no place in subsistence, and therefore cannot be a part of God's knowledge. Ibn 'Arabī is apparently at a loss in solving this difficulty. In the *Fuṣūṣ* he makes the sequence in which a particular thing shall appear in existence a part of its subsistent idea *('ayn thābitah)*. "The timing (of a thing) belongs originally to (its) idea"[56]. But he does not show how there can be a sequence in the ideas that are coeternal. In the *Futūḥāt*, on the other hand, he treats God's knowledge of sequence as a special kind of knowledge which is independent and determinative of its object. He calls it divine wisdom *(al-hikmah al-Ilāhīyah)* and explains:

> Wisdom is a particular kind of knowledge although it is all-embracing. The difference between wisdom and knowledge is that whereas wisdom is efficient, knowledge is not. Knowledge is dependent upon its object whereas wisdom determines things in a particular way. That is, the order in the ideal entities in the state of subsistence is fixed by the wisdom of the Wise[57].

This is an admission of a Divine knowledge which in Jīlī's words is original, independent and determinative of its object.

God's knowledge of Himself does not pose any special problem for Ibn 'Arabī. He knows Himself in knowing things and knows things in knowing Himself because things are one with Him as His essential modes. There is only one difference, however. He knows things in the sense that He encompasses

them, whereas He knows Himself as one who is beyond encompassing[58].

Will of God

The will of God operates at the level of ideas as well as existence. Ibn 'Arabī calls the former *al-mashīyah*, the essential will, and the latter *al-irādah*, the phenomenal will. But he often disregards the distinction and uses one in place of the other. The essential will, as he explains it, is nothing more than the differentiation of things as distinct essences in the knowledge of God. The phenomenal will concerns with the passage of things from subsistence to existence, from potency to actuality, as well as the extinction of things from existence or, to put it differently, the withdrawal of existence from them.

Ibn 'Arabī defines will as an inclination towards one particular thing rather than the other[59]. This does not, however, mean that the Divine will involves a choice. For God wills what he knows, and that which he knows is what the things are in themselves in their ideal forms. "The will of God can be associated with one thing only. It is a relation which is subject to knowledge, and knowledge is a relation which depends upon its object, and the object is you and your states"[60]. The absence of a possible alternative and the association of God's will with the one and only object in His knowledge is called by Ibn 'Arabī the singularity of the Divine will *(aḥadīyat al-mashīyah)*[61].

Ibn 'Arabī argues for the singularity of God's will from the nature of the world. The world that we have is, he says, the most perfect world possible, because God could not have willed a world less perfect without compromising His goodness. Hence the world could not have been different from what it actually is.

God wills but He does not choose because He does not have alternatives to choose between. "His will *('amr)* is one. How can there be a choice"[62]? "Gnosis *(ḥaqīqah)*", he says,

"affirms will and denies choice, as it affirms knowledge and denies governance (*tadbīr*)"[63]. But the negation of choice, he pleads, does not mean compulsion, because nothing exists other than God to compel him. The ideas that determine God's will are His essential modes. Hence there is in fact a self-determination rather than compulsion.

The world is necessary; all that happens here is bound to happen in the same order in which it has been fixed from eternity. To call it possible is sheer ignorance.

> To say that something is possible is to make a fanciful statement, which is inconceivable in case of God as well as the objects said to be possible. For nothing can be said to be possible which is not chosen over against an alternative. But there is no choice for God and no preference of one thing over another. Possibility is not a rational idea; it is simply an illusion. There is either the Necessary in Himself or the necessary by Him. The will of God in things is only one[64].

In fact "the use of possibility in the Divine context is an act of impudence to God"[65].

The essential will of God is identical with things as essence; there is, therefore, no question of priority between them. The phenomenal will, however, is logically prior to its objects, or, as Ibn 'Arabī puts it, it has a priority of status over its objects. It does not precede them, for God's willing of their existence and their coming into existence are simultaneous[66].

The Creative Word

God's will brings things into existence. But strictly speaking it is only a condition for their existence. That which makes them exist is the creative word of God *(al-qawl bi'l-ījād)*. The moment the creative word is uttered the essences *(a'yān)* of things listen to it and respond by coming into

existence. All this happens simultaneously in one and the same moment[67].

Ibn 'Arabī attributes power *(qudrah)* to God as he attributes will *(irādah)* to Him, and considers it as a particular relation between the Divine essence and the things of the world which are the objects of his power *(maqdūrāt)*. But by power he would not understand the ability to do or not to do an act, because God has no choice. Nor would he understand power as the ability to bring something out of absolute nothing *(al-'adam al-maḥḍ)* as theologians believe, because things exist in the mind of God before they come to exist in the world. He means by Divine power nothing else than the creative word[68].

Creation

Creation takes place in two phases. The first phase Ibn 'Arabī calls *khalq al-taqdīr* or archetypal creation which is the differentiation of the Absolute into the ideal archetypes *(a'yān thābitah)* of things, the second phase he calls *khalq al-ījād* or existential creation which is the appearance *(ẓuhūr)* of the ideal archetypes into phenomenal existence.

But by the appearance of the ideal essence into existence, Ibn 'Arabī does not mean that they are transferred from the ideal to the external world. That would involve the transmutation of ideas into concrete existence, which is, as he says, impossible because realities never change. Usually mystics characterize creation as the qualification of the ideal *(a'yān)* with existence *(ittiṣāf bi'l-wujūd)*, and Ibn 'Arabī also uses the expression at times. But this cannot mean that the ideal essences are themselves qualified with existence; that is, as has been said, not possible. Another interpretation may be that not the ideal essences but their images or copies appear in the external world and get qualified with existence. This is the view to which Plato and the neo-Platonists subscribe. Ibn 'Arabī does not and cannot mean this, because it would contradict his fundamental doctrine of the oneness of Being.

What appears in existence, therefore, is neither the ideal essences themselves, nor their images and copies but their characteristics and properties *(aḥkām wa āthār)*. The Absolute Being differentiates itself into determinate forms in the outer world corresponding to the essences of things in the ideal realm. The existential forms of the Absolute manifest the properties of the ideal forms *(a'yān thābitah)* without the latter having any kind of existence, real or adumberal in the external world.

According to Ibn 'Arabī, people have a wrong notion that the ideal forms appear in the world and acquire existence. The truth is that the Divine existence determines itself on the patterns of the ideal essences manifesting their characteristics and properties; it is these existential forms that we call things. "There is no existence (out there) except the existence of God (qualified) with forms of the states that constitute possible beings as they are in themselves, that is, in their ideal essences"[69]. This is what Ibn 'Arabī says in the *Fuṣūṣ*. In the *Futūḥāt* he writes:

> God is the underlying ground of all the forms which appear in existence. The *a'yān* of things in subsistence with all their diverse states are the object of his knowledge as ideas. And the *a'yān* of these forms which appear in existence which is the Absolute itself are the properties of the *a'yān* of things exactly as they are in subsistence including all the states, changes and variations that happen to these phenomenal forms of the Divine Existence itself[70].

Ibn 'Arabī makes it sufficiently clear that the existential forms of the Divine existence in which the properties of things constituting their ideal *a'yān* appear are not a form of existence different from the Divine existence but absolutely one and identical with it. There is no difference, numerical or qualitative, between them. The only difference that we have is that of absoluteness *(iṭlāq)* and determination *(taqyīd)*. "There is only one Existence there, which in God is absolute and in things conditioned"[71]. The relation between God's existence

and the existence of things is a very important issue in Ṣūfī theosophy and Ibn 'Arabī returns to this problem again and again in the *Futūḥāt*. At one place he writes:

> In theosophy there is no problem more difficult than this. Contingent beings, according to the mystics, acquire nothing from God except existence. But nobody understands what the words 'acquire nothing except existence' really mean except those to whom God has revealed the truth. The people who utter these words do not know what the truth is and how these words express it. There is no existence except God, and the contigents are in the state of non-existence. This 'acquired existence' if it exists must be one of these two things. Either it is other than God and other than the *a'yān* (ideal essences) of the contingents, or it is identical with the Divine Existence. In case it is something other than God and other than the *a'yān* of the contingents and exists there it must exist by itself. But then it is God, because it has been proved that nothing is there eternally except God. He alone exists necessarily by Himself. Now when it is established that nothing exists in itself except God then the *a'yān* of the contingents receive through their properties the existence of God, as there is no existence other than He. This is exactly what God has said: "We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is in between them except with *al-ḥaqq* [by which Ibn 'Arabī means God]". He is the existence as such and to it is predicated all that the properties of the *a'yān* offer Him. As a result things are distinguished, essences appear, decrees come into force; considerations of high, low and middle emerge; varieties, polarities, and beings of all kinds, genera, species, individuals with their varying states and properties appear in One Being *('ayn wāḥidah)*. Thus differentiate various forms, and appear the names of God which have their effects in what comes into existence without the effects being attributed to the *a'yān* of the contingents in what appears in It (i.e. One Being). Since the effects are

produced by Divine names and the names are the Named, therefore nothing is there in existence except God, He is the origin of the predicates *(al-Ḥākim)* and he is their subject *(al-Qābil)*[72].

At another place in the *Futūḥāt* he writes:

Is it the case that that which is qualified with existence and available in our sense perception is the subsisting essence *('ayn thābitah)* transferred from the state of non-existence to the state of existence? Or is it that the properties of the subsisting essence are associated with the Real Existence itself *(al-Wujūd al-Ḥaqq)* as the image of an object is associated with the mirror (in which it appears) and the subsisting essence remains in its state of non-existence ever as it is in subsistence? On the latter view the contingents perceive each other while they are in the mirror of God's existence and the subsisting essences continue to be in their non-existential state in the order they are with us. Or is it the case that the Real Existence *(al-Ḥaqq al-Wujūdī)* appears in these essences while they serve as his manifest forms so that one essence perceives the other when the Real manifests in them? This is what is described as the *a'yān* having acquired existence but is nothing more than the manifestation of the Real in them. This characterization is nearer to truth in one sense, while the other characterization is nearer to truth in another sense. The truth is that the Real is the subject of the manifestation of the properties of the contingent beings. The common truth in both these characterizations is that possibles have no footing *('ayn)* in existence; they continue to be in subsistence. The mystics who see some point in both these characterizations their *kashf* is perfect. Others who see the point of one characterization, whichever it is, speak accordingly[73].

The concept of existential creation is related with the concept of space and time. According to Ibn 'Arabī, space and time have no footing in existence; there is nothing in existence

to which spatial and temporal relations may refer. In a passage of the *Futūḥāt* as we have seen he refers them to the wisdom *(ḥikmah)* of God which is independent of its object and precedes it; in the *Fuṣūṣ* he regards them as part of the ideal essences of things. Whatever may be the correct view, it is certain that Ibn 'Arabī does not think that they are the subjective creations of human mind; they are independent of human minds and have a kind of objectivity. He even attributes to them an intellectual existence. This is true not only for time and space but for all relations. "The intellectual reality of relations does not change. To be sure, it does not have an external existence, but it does have an intellectual existence *(al-wujūd al-'aqlī)* and is knowable"[74].

A fundamental principle of Ibn 'Arabī's philosophy is that nothing which exists at one moment of time lasts for the next[75]. Every moment it is created anew. We have seen that the individual *'ayn* in the ideal world is not one essence but a collectivity of essences representing each successive state of an individual. Similarly a particular object or person in the world is not one existent but a series of existents. Every moment a new member of the series of essences appears in existence and passes out of existence[76]. Every moment it is a fresh creation *(khalq jadīd)*. Since the members of the series resemble in some respects, creation may be described as a renewal of replicas *(tajdīd al-amthāl)*[77]. But since no two members of the series are exactly the same, no existential epiphany *(tajallī wujūdī)* is repeated twice[78]. Every moment there is a new world. It follows that an object is a continuous flux[79] of events. But since nothing exists other than God, the same point can be put in a different language. One can say that God appears every moment of time in a new state *(yataqallab fi 'l-aḥwāl)*[80]. This movement from one state to another, however, does not affect God; He remains above the flux holding all the changing states together and conferring on them the appearance of an enduring individuality[81].

When one moves from the individual objects to their totality the position does not change. The world comes into being one moment and disappears the other moment; it is just a collectivity of momentary accidents. In the words of Ibn 'Arabī the world is an assembly of accidents in one Existent *(al-'ālam a'rāḍ mujtami'ah fī 'ayn wāḥidah)*"[82]. There is only one substance, God, and the entire world is mere accidents; the distinction of substance and accidents in the objects of the world which the philosophers and theologians draw is sheer ignorance.

From the doctrine that the world is a collectivity of accidents in one Divine substance, three consequences follow. First, all that is predicated of objects is in fact a predication of one accident to another or one meaning to another. The real subject of all predicates and the bearer of all meanings is God. "Whatever name is predicated of any entity", Ibn 'Arabī says, "is predicated of it as an epiphany of the Absolute". Hence every name is predicated of the Absolute existing in the entities which in themselves are incapable of admitting any predicates. Even to characterize them as epiphanies *(mazāhir)* is symbolical *(ḥukman)* and not real *('aynan)*. Existence is God's and any subject of which something is predicated the referent of that subject is the referent of the word 'Allah'. Let it be clearly understood that there is nothing in existence except that Existent to which the word 'God' refers. It is that Existent which is the referent of every name *(ism)*, of every positive attribute *(ṣifah)* and every negative predicate *(na't)*[83]. Ibn 'Arabī makes no reservations. This rule applies to all attributes and predicates that we refer to any thing in the world, whether or not society, reason or the *Shar'* approves. "Don't you see", he says, "that God appears with the attributes of all contingent things! He has Himself said this. (He appears) with attributes of imperfection and the attributes that are disapproved"[84].

The second consequence is that every action whether cognitive or conative which is done by any agent is in fact done by God and the so called agent is only the locus *(maḥall)* of

God's action. Action is the prerogative of existence and can be predicated of the existential entity and not the subsisting entity. And since there is only one existing entity there, all activity is to be predicated of it alone. Every action which proceeds from anything in the world is the action of God; there is only one Actor there. It follows, therefore, that "there is no knower in reality except Allah"[85], that "no one sees God except God"[86], that "no one remembers God except God"[87], that "He is the worshipper as He is the object of worship"[88], and so on.

The third consequence is that all the experiences which individuals enjoy or suffer are really enjoyed or suffered by God. "In all things He is the one who affects and He is the one who is affected"[89]. "God is the agent and the world is the patient, because it is the object wherein (God's) suffering of (His) actions appears"[90]. Ibn 'Arabī takes care not to attribute even suffering or passivity *(infi'āl)* to the world. God is the subject that suffers as He is the subject that acts. One should, however, make a distinction, Ibn 'Arabī says, between experience as an existential fact and experience as judged by the individual who is the locus of the experience. As a fact, the experience belongs to God, but as a judgment it belongs to the individual. "Things are attributed to God as facts caused by Him, but the judgment of enjoying them or not enjoying them is that of the recipient"[91]. In other words, to say that God enjoys or suffers means that He has the experience and the individual in whom He has the experience regards it as pleasurable or painful. This effort to scape a corollary of the doctrine of One existence can hardly be considered to be convincing.

God and the World

The world is one with God, but it is also different from God. It is one with God in respect to existence for all existence is God's existence, and nothing exists besides God. It is different from God in respect to the *a'yān* of things in whose form God exists in the world[92]. Both these aspects of identity

and difference are, according to Ibn 'Arabī, real. Certainly, the world and God are not two different existents, no space separates them and no time intervenes between them[93]. Their difference is a difference of status *(rutbah)*[94], as Ibn 'Arabī puts it, or a difference of *i'tibār*[95] (intellectual consideration) as Jāmī calls it. Status is a relational concept and as such has no footing *('ayn)* in existence. This is true, but it is not a fanciful idea either. "It is something intelligible *(amr ma'qūl)*, knowable and consequential and capable of generating predicates"[96]. It would be wrong, therefore, to regard *rutbah* or *i'tibār* as purely subjective categories. God is God, and the world is world, and the realities never change. It is true that they share in a number of attributes and predicates, but each one also has some attributes and characteristics which are not shared by the other. For instance God exists by Himself, but the world does not exist by itself[97]. God is self-necessary and self-sufficient, the world is made necessary by God and is dependent upon Him[98]. The world is finite because it is in existence, and every thing that is in existence is finite. But God is infinite because He is not in existence, He is Existence itself[99]. The world is in constant flux, a colony of vanishing accidents. But God is not in flux; rather the flux is in God. He is the eternal Substance[100].

Ibn 'Arabī describes the world as *'adam* or *ma'dūm* (non-existent), *mutawahham* (illusory) and *khayāl* or *khayālī* (imaginary). But these appellations, as he elaborates, by no means negate the reality of the world or the objectivity of our knowledge. By non-existence, for instance, he either means that the world is not a self-necessary existence, but a dependent existence as though it is non-existent, or that the world is a relative non-being, because only its *a'yān* subsist, and it is God that exists in their form. The former meaning is intended in passages like the following:

> For the real gnostic nothing exists except God, and our existence, if we exist, depends upon His existence. And he who exists by something else is as though non-existent *(fī*

ḥukm al-'adam)[101]. The meaning of the statement that God exists and nothing exists with Him is that there is nothing whose existence is self-necessary except God. Possible beings are necessary by God, for they are the outward forms in which He manifests and their *a'yān* (essences) are veiled by His appearance in them[102].

The other meaning of *'adam* is implied in passages like this:

> The Absolute Being has its opposite in absolute non-being. The latter has a characteristic in virtue of which it is called impossible and never exists. It does not share in existence as the Necessary Being does not share in non-existence. But we occupy an intermediary position. We admit of being by ourselves as we admit of non-existence by ourselves..... However, we are closer to non-existence than to existence, because we are non-existent without, of course, being impossible. The character of our non-existence is possibility which means it is not in our power to refuse being nor non-being. We have subsisting beings differentiated and defined which are the subject of both the predicates[103].

Similarly when Ibn 'Arabī says that the world is imaginary *(khayālī)* or illusory *(mutawahham)* what he means to say is that it appears to us other than what it really is. It appears, for instance, that things have a kind of continuity and permanence, but in reality every thing except God is constantly changing and is unable to survive even for the second moment. It also appears that things exist in themselves apart from God, but the truth is that God exists in them as required by their essences. To most of us it appears that there is an absolute difference between God and the world, whereas to some mystics the world may appear to be completely identical with God. The truth, however, is that there is a real identity as there is a real difference between the world and God. The following passages illustrate these three meanings in which Ibn 'Arabī calls the world imaginary or illusory.

The First Meaning:

Realities do not change or transform. But the reality of the imaginary is transformation in every state and appearance in every form. The only real existence which does not suffer change is God. Therefore in real existence there is nothing except God, and all else is imaginary existence[104].

All that is is, as a matter of fact, imaginary, because it does not remain at one state[105].

The Second Meaning:

The world is illusory *(al-mutawahham)*; it has no real existence. This is the meaning of the imaginary *(al-khayālī)* because it appears to you as something other (than God) existing in itself, separate from the Real, whereas in fact it is not so[106].

He is the reality that we experience in a world which is illusory. The world is something (abstracted) by reason *(amr ma'qūl)* whereas God is given in sensation and perception[107].

The Third Meaning:

In fact, the whole world is created *(khalq)* and not created alike, real and not real alike. It is an imaginary object: sensible and not sensible, perceptible and not perceptible. In other words, it is imaginary[108].

The world is both Nature and God, existent and non-existent. It is neither purely existent, nor purely non-existent. It is a magical show that appears to you as real but it is not real: it appears to you as creation but it is not creation. For it is neither created *(khalq)* in every respect nor the Real *(al-Ḥaqq)* in every respect. When a man under spell perceives some object we do not doubt that he perceives something, even though the object is not there. The words of God that "due to the spell it appeared to him that the serpent was moving" are certainly true.

> Movement was indeed a fact of perception. But the question is what was that which was moving? The ropes thrown on the earth were just ropes, so was the stick. Hence if creation were really separate from God it would not exist there. But if, on the other hand, it were one with God it would not have been created. That is why it is both[109].

Descent of Being

The ontological structure which Ibn 'Arabī has constructed exhibits the descent of Being (in his sense of descent) in various stages. At the ground of this structure we have Pure Being *(al-wujūd al-maḥḍ)* which is beyond all differentiation and consideration. Nothing can be said of it except that it is Being *(wujūd)*; even consciousness cannot be predicated of it. Since thought distinguishes between Being and conscious Being, Pure Being has to be placed above consciousness. The *wujūdīs* consider consciousness as the first descent of Being from its absolute undifferentiated unity *(aḥadīyah)*. Ibn 'Arabī does not separate self-consciousness of the Absolute from his consciousness of things; in his view one involves the other. Hence, the self-knowledge of the Absolute is also his knowledge of the ideal essences (*a'yān thabitah*) of things in all their multiplicity. But as the ideal essences are the essential modes of the Absolute, the Absolute as knowing is still a real unity, but in contradistinction with its former absolute unity it is a unity of multiplicity *(aḥadīyat al-kathrah)*. Using the terminology of the philosophers, Ibn 'Arabī calls the Absolute at this stage the First Intelligence or simply Intelligence, for he dispenses with the other Intelligences of neo-Platonism. He also calls it the First Emanate *(al-Ṣādir al-Awwal)*. But intelligence, as has been pointed out in the beginning, is not a separate being as the philosophers regard it, but just a name or a title of the Absolute as Walī Allāh calls it. In a very illuminating passage he brings out the difference between the *wujūdī* Intelligence and the neo-Platonic Intelligence:

> The first emanation from the Necessary Reality is one of the names of God, and not an Intelligence as the philosophers understand it. A name is a title *('unwān)* of a thing, it refers to the thing and not to something different. The thing as it is in its essence is not a name, it is a name when it takes up an attribute which either elucidates its essence *(māhīyah)* as 'pair' does with the number four, or suggests something which is over and above the thing and unimplied in its essence, as is the case between writer and man. This is the reality of name in general. But so far as the First Emanate is concerned, it is a name in the former sense; that is, it is implied in the Essence. For the Necessary Essence is the very being of Intelligence and we cannot imagine that something is in some being yet it is not implied in the essence of that being. The Intelligence of the philosophers, on the other hand, is a different substance *(jawhar mutaghāyir)*; it is neither a title of the Necessary Being nor does it refer to it[110].

Things appear first in knowledge and then in existence. Existence, therefore, is a consideration that appears in Being after knowledge. It is the second descent of the Absolute. In philosophical language it may be called the Universal Soul *(al-Nafs al-Kullīyah)*. But the usual term by which Ibn 'Arabī refers to it is the Breath of the Merciful *(Nafs al-Raḥmān)*. Consistently with his doctrine he regards it as a consideration of the Absolute. In the words of Walī Allāh it is a title of the Absolute that brings out the existence aspect of the Absolute in addition to its knowledge aspect. Whereas the Intelligence is the Absolute as knowing, the Universal Soul is the Absolute as knowing and existing. Like the Intelligence, the Universal Soul is also a unity of multiplicity: the difference between the two unities is that the former is ideal *(ma'qūl)* and potential *(ṣalāḥīyatan)* while the latter is external *(khārijī)* and actual *(fi'lan)*[111]. There is another difference also. The ideal *a'yān* of things are eternal, consequently the unity of the Intelligence is static. On the other hand, objects come into existence and go out of it constantly, and at a particular time there is only a

limited number which appears in existence, consequently the unity of the Universal Soul is dynamic. The individuals that constitute the unity perpetually change, but the totality persists on for ever; particulars vanish as soon as they come into existence, but their Universal Matter, (to which Ibn 'Arabī likens the Merciful Breath), remains there eternally[112].

We have noted earlier that God is the Absolute qualified with attributes and names which appear in the Absolute due to its relation with the objects as ideas or as existents. Ibn 'Arabī explains the relation between God and the Absolute as follows:

> Godhead *(al-Ulūhah)* is nothing different from the Absolute Essence. Though Godhead means more than what the Essence means and as such is different from the Essence, yet it is nothing except the Essence[113].

In other words, Allah (God) is the name or the title of the Absolute. It is, however, not a particular name like other names such as the Creator or the Knower. Nor is it a general name of the kind the Intelligence and the Universal Soul are. It is the all-comprehensive name *(ism jāmi')*[114] of the Absolute, including all the particular and general names. It is the Absolute qualified with all attributes and names that accrue to it due to its relation with all the things in subsistence and in existence.

Has the Absolute any sort of primacy over God? In answering this question one should first note that God is not a descent of the Absolute whether general as Intelligence and the Universal Soul are or particular as the ideas and the existing objects are. The second thing that we should note is that although particular objects come into existence and pass out of it, the world as a whole is eternal and everlasting; therefore the Absolute is never unqualified. "The Absolute", Ibn 'Arabī says, "is never without the forms of the world. Hence his characterization as God is real and not metaphorical"[115]. Thirdly, even if we suppose that the world did not exist at some time the ideas of the objects had always been there in the Absolute from eternity. Hence the Absolute was never

undifferentiated; therefore the Absolute has no precedence over God. Ibn 'Arabī writes:

> The Absolute is absolute, and man is man. When you say man or mankind are servants of God, you say that God is the Lord of mankind; that necessarily follows. Let us suppose that the entire world which is God's kingdom disappears from your mind. But the existence of the Absolute will not disappear by the disappearance of the world. Only the meaning of the King will disappear as a consequence. But since the being of the world is correlated with the being of the Absolute, actually and potentially, the name Lord is true for God from eternity. Although the *'ayn* of the world is not there in existence its idea exists there as the correlate of the name Lord. Hence the world is the dominion of God existentially and ideally, potentially and actually[116].

In short, the relation between the Absolute and God is like the relation between a thing considered in its bare essence *(dhāt)* and the thing considered as qualified with its necessary attributes. The one apart from the other is an abstraction. "God isolated from the Absolute is mere word for the one who knows the truth"[117]. On the other hand, there is nothing beyond God to be sought. You might think that the Essence which transcends the world is beyond God. But that is not true. God is beyond the Essence *(warā' al-dhāt)* and there is no goal beyond God[118].

Knowing God *(ma'rifah)*

The knowledge of God *(ma'rifah)* which is the end of mysticism is to know Him as one with the world, and as different from it, and as He is in Himself. There are three ways of knowing God: reason, revelation and the *kashf* of the mystic. So far as reason is concerned, it is capable of knowing without the aid of revelation, that God exists, that He is one and there is no god beside Him. Reason can further establish some

...ons about God; for instance, it can show that God is ...knowing and powerful, that He is the Creator and the Lord or ...that He is eternal and everlasting[119]. But it is completely ...incapable of saying any thing about the nature and essence of God. It cannot say, for instance, what precisely His knowledge, power, creation, Lordship, eternity mean, or how exactly He is related with the world, in ...y He is one with the world and in what way different ...t, or what is He in His bare essence[120]. Reason is finite ... its efficacy in ultimate matters like God, soul and the hereafter is quite limited[121].

Another handicap of reason is that irrespective of whether it works all by itself or interprets revelation it tends to put a cleavage between God and the world. Philosophers and theologians, whatever may be their differences, agree in the belief that God is somehow external to the world, like a cause to its effect. They seem to be unaware that in transcendentalising God *(tanzīh)* in this way they reduce Him to something less than the whole of reality and thus limit *(taqyīd)* Him[122]. The *tanzīh* of separation denies to God a lot of things which He really has. Philosophers reduce Him to pure intelligence and place the whole of the material world outside Him[123]. Many of them even limit His knowledge to universal verities and deprive Him of the knowledge of particular objects. Theologians are hardly better. The Mu'tazilah, for instance, deny the vision *(ru'yah)*[124] of God, subject Him to the authority of human reason and make incumbent on Him to punish the sinner if he does not repent[125]. They boast that man has a will of his own and is the real doer or, as they call it, the creator of his acts. The Ashā'irah who think that they follow the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (peace be on him) admit that God creates human acts and is actually their doer but inconsistently enough they put up the show of man's acquisition *(kasb)* to his acts. On the one hand, they affirm the reality of God's vision, but on the other, they deny that the hands, face, and eyes of God, or His joy, smile, anger and mercy, or His descent, enthronement *(istiwā')* and accompaniment *(ma'iyyah)* are

real. They reduce them [illegible]
independent or guided by revel[illegible]
except the idea of a finite God *(Ilah* [illegible]
have an infinite God *(Ilāh muṭlaq)*. [illegible]
according to its own wishes. Instead of a Cr[illegible]
God of its own creation *(Ilāh bi l-ja'l)*, a God fas[illegible]
belief *(al-Ilāh al-makhlūq fi l-i'tiqād)*[128]. Whoever da[illegible]
comprehend Divine realities in rational categories [illegible]
impertinent.

The second way to know God is prophetic revelation. The prophet *(al-nabī)* as Ibn 'Arabī understands him is essentially a saint *(walī)*. He knows the truth as the mystic does, but the language in which truth is revealed to him for communication to his people or the language he himself chooses to express the truth – which together are called the language of the *Shar'* – differs from the language of the mystic. As the prophet has to address every one his words are derived from the common language of his people. He uses ordinary terms and idioms and avoids the sophisticated terminology of the philosophers and the mystics[129]. But the truth that he conveys in his own style is the same truth which the mystic expresses in his technical ontological language. He does not transcendentalize God and separate Him from the world as rationalist philosophers and theologians do. Instead, he differentiates God as well as identifies Him with the world; he identifies Him just as He really is, one with the world, and differentiates Him as it behoves Him. Ibn 'Arabī makes this point at various places in the *Fuṣūṣ* and the *Futūḥāt*. In the *Fuṣūṣ* he writes:

> When reason tries to acquire truth all by itself it pronounces the transcendence of God and not His immanence. But when God bestows upon it mystical knowledge *(al-ma'rifah bi l-tajallī)* it gets a perfect knowledge of God. Then it transcendentalizes God in one way and immanentizes Him in another. It discovers that God is immanent in each and every form whether material or non-material, and realizes that there is no form there

> whose essence is not the Essence of God. This is the perfect knowledge which God-sent revelations teach and which is also pronounced by rational imagination (of the mystics) ... All heavenly revelations have come down with this truth. They transcendentalize as well as immanentize: they immanentize through imagination in the midst of transcendentalizing, and transcendentalize through reason in the midst of immanentizing.... God has elevated himself from the transcendentalization of the rationalists because they have finitized Him through their transcendentalization[130].

One has to note that Ibn 'Arabī does not make the distinction between the finite God fashioned in belief and the infinite God of reality in connection with his discussion of revelation. He attributes a finite God to reason, whether acting independently in philosophy or interpreting revelation in theology. He never attributes it to revelation itself. The revelation as a prophet has it or understands it corroborates the existence of infinite God as Ibn 'Arabī affirms it. A finite God is the God of theological thought interpreting prophetic revelation, or the God of the common man who accepts it following *(bi l-taqlīd)*[131] the theologian. Revelation is in complete agreement with the truth of the mystic except in one thing. It does not speak of the Divine Essence as it is in itself, transcending every imaginable distinction and relation, as the mystic *kashf* does. It only speaks of the Divine Essence as it manifests in the world. In other words, revelation does not speak of the undifferentiated unity *(aḥadīyat muṭlaqah)* or the absolute oneness of the Essence *(aḥadīyat al-dhāt)* but only of the unity of Godhead *(al-aḥadīyah al-Ilāhīyah)*[132].

The perfect way of knowing God in all His three aspects – in the absolute transcendental unity of His Essence, in His substantial identity with the world, and His formal difference from it – is the *kashf* of the mystic. It is important in this context to distinguish between various levels of mystical knowledge and see exactly in which way the mystic knows

God. That level of mystical experience which is designated variously as spiritual vision (*shuhūd* or *mushāhadah*) or the perception of the heart or the inner 'eye' *(al-baṣīrah)* and of which *dhawq* (literally taste) forms the first stage, reveals the unity of the Essence in manifestation, the unity of plurality, as Ibn 'Arabī says, or the unity of Godhead. The transcendental unity of Being as such or of the Essence of God is beyond its reach. "Since the contingent does not participate in the self-necessity which is of God it is incapable of comprehending God. At that level God is unknowable even to *dhawq* and *shuhūd* (mystic vision)"[133].

Contrary to the common belief, the mystic does not see God in his infinitude. The God of his vision, Ibn 'Arabī says, is a finite God because his vision is necessarily determined by the limited perspective of his pre-existential essence which it cannot transcend. The God which he experiences in his visions is a God of his belief *(al-Ilāh al-mu'taqad)* shaped according to the knowledge which is endowed in his ideal essence. Ibn 'Arabī explains this point as follows:

> God has *tajallīs*, one essential *(tajallī ghayb)* and the other existential *(tajallī shahādah)*. In virtue of the former He endows the heart with the capacity it has.... After the heart has acquired that capacity, God bestows upon it the existential *tajallī* in the phenomenal world by which he sees God. Thus He manifests Himself in the form with which He has already endowed it as we have mentioned. God endows with the capacity as He says: "He gives every thing its form", and then removes the veil from between Him and His servant, who perceives Him in the form of his own belief. He (God) is therefore just his belief. Hence his heart or eyes never see anything other than the form of his belief in God. It is the God of belief whose form the heart contains and it is this which appears to the heart which it recognizes as God. In short, the eye does not see except the God of belief *(al-Ḥaqq al-i'tiqādī)*[134].

The way to know the infinite God *(al-Ilāh al-muṭlaq)* is not vision *(mushāhadah)* but *mukāshafah*. Ibn 'Arabī explains the difference between the two as follows:

> *Mukāshafah* is concerned with meanings *(ma'ānī)* and *mushāhadah* is concerned with objects *(dhuwāt)*. Hence *mushāhadah* is of the object named *(al-musammā)* and *mukāshafah* is of the effect of the name. In our opinion *mukāshafah* is more perfect than *mushādadah*. But if the *mushādadah* of God's Essence were possible it would certainly have been more perfect. But that is not possible... It may be illustrated like this. When you perceive *(shāhadta)* a moving thing you seek for its mover through *kashf*. For the fact that it has a mover is known through *kashf*. Thus knowledge is related to two objects whereas the perception *(mushāhadah)* is confined to one object only. Hence *kashf* reveals that which is not revealed by *mushāhadah*. Moreover, *kashf* reveals the details of what is available in essence in *shuhūd*[135].

In the light of this passage the relation between *mushāhadah* and *mukāshafah* is like the relation between the sense-perception and imagination. *Kashf* is an imaginative inference from a mystic vision. So the mystic's knowledge of the infinite God is a work of his imagination based upon his finite vision of God which is available to him in his experience. His *kashf* reveals that God is the subject of all descriptions with which any thing is described. Precisely because God is the subject of all predicates and the substance of all forms, His description is impossible[136]. That *kashf* reveals the infinite God means that the mystic knows through his *kashf* that God is infinite, that He as such is unknowable.

Tawḥīd

Real *tawḥīd* or the belief in the unity of God is that (i) there is One Being only, God, who exists in each and every object of the world without suffering any kind of division or

variation in Him, that (ii) all the attributes which are predicated of Him are relational predicates that accrue to Him in relation to His determinate forms, that (iii) the bearer of all the attributes *(ṣifāt)*, the agent of all the acts, and the subject of all experience that any object does or has is God in that object, and that (iv) the objects of the world in spite of their substantial oneness with God are formally different from Him with a difference that is eternal and everlasting.

Every belief in God which is different from this belief is wrong. The *tawḥīd* of the theologians is wrong because it assumes the fundamental duality of the Creator and the creation. That version of theological *tawḥīd* which regards God as the sole agent of all actions *(tawḥīd fi'lī)* is also far from truth because it still maintains the separate existence of beings, though it reduces them to a state of passivity. And the doctrine which ascribes not only the effective power in the objects but all their attributes to God as their only proper subject *(tawḥīd ṣifātī)* is also short of the real truth if it makes any distinction between the existence of God and the existence of the objects. The doctrine of Incarnation is wrong just because it implies that distinction[137].

Common forms of polytheism *(shirk)* are wrong because in worship they associate with God some being which they regard as other than God, whereas the fact is that there is no being in existence other than God. This means that the worship of an object regarded as a manifestation of God, which is the case in reality, is justified. Idolatry is to be condemned in two forms only: one, when the object of worship is a god existing in itself apart from God, and, second, when a particular object is singled out as the exclusive manifestation of God worthy of worship because it involves the belief that other objects are not the manifestations of God. Christians are guilty of the second mistake in their belief and worship of Christ[138].

Ibn 'Arabī justifies the worship of forms as a consequence of his doctrine of the substantial identity of all objects with God. But whether it necessarily follows from that doctrine is

rather doubtful. For one can believe in the identity and still regard the worship of forms as wrong on the ground that each form is a limited and finite manifestation of God and as such unworthy of worship. The only being worthy of worship is the infinite God who transcends all finite forms.

Ibn 'Arabī knows that the prophets of God in all ages have condemned the worship of forms indiscriminately and have never distinguished between a worship with a right attitude and a worship with a wrong attitude. He obviously feels a contradiction between his view and the view of the prophets. He also feels that his justification of the worship of forms conflicts with his own doctrine that *tashrī'* or the authority to legislate what acts are right and what are wrong is the prerogative of the Prophet, and the *walī* has only to follow him. The way which Ibn 'Arabī chooses out of this difficulty is that he condemns this form of worship by his lips while he seems to continue to believe in his heart that it is in reality right. The contradiction is visible in the following passage of the *Fuṣūṣ*:

> The perfect gnostic is one who sees all the object of worship as the manifestation of God wherein He is worshipped. That is why they [i.e. the worshippers] have called all of them god qualified with His particular name, stone, tree, animal, man, star or king.... So they [i.e. mystics] do not condemn it, rather admire it. For, they stop at the multiplicity of forms and at the attribution of divinity to them. But the prophet comes and calls them to one God that can be known but cannot be perceived.... The gnostics, however, who are aware of the reality as it is, pronounce condemnation externally *(yuẓhirūn bi ṣūrat al-inkār)* on the worship of forms, because their position according to revelation *(al-'ilm)* demands that they should at that time follow the prophet in whom they believe and on account of which they are called believers *(mu'minūn)*. So they are subject to (the call of the) time, although they know that they [i.e. the worshippers of forms] do not

worship the forms themselves, but worship God in them[139].

Religion and Morals

The *Shar'* has two parts: One, which tells about God and the world, about man, his life here and hereafter, about prophecy and the prophets; and the other part which lays down norms and rules of behaviour in various aspects of human life, religious, moral and social. The first which concerns Reality is a matter of knowledge and belief; the second which concerns Law is a matter of action and practice. Ibn 'Arabī thinks that the first is the field of the saint *(walī)* and the second is the field of the prophet *(nabī/rasūl)*. When the prophet speaks of Reality he speaks of it as saint[140]. The ways in which the saint and the prophet acquire their knowledge of Reality may differ in matters of detail but they are in essence one because both are trans-rational and direct intuitions of Reality. This is the justification of calling the prophet a saint.

One way in which the intuition of the prophet differs from the intuition of the mystic is that the intuition of the former is infallible both in respect to the perception of Reality and its interpretation, whereas the intuition of the mystic is infallible only in respect to perception and not interpretation[141]. This means that the mystic intuition is true so long as it does not contradict the prophetic intuition. However, this provision which is stated by all the mystics is more of theoretical than practical significance. For the effect of this provision regarding the knowledge of Reality is negated and often reversed by the two doctrines which the Ṣūfīs maintain. One is concerned with the language of the prophetic intuition. It is said that since the prophet has to communicate with the common man he uses metaphors and symbols to convey the truth. The mystic, on the other hand, communicates with a few selected people and therefore makes use of a sophisticated terminology and speaks of Reality in its nakedness. Hence if you want the clear and undisguised truth you have to go to the mystic. His perception

(kashf) of Reality is the measure for the interpretation of prophetic Revelation and theological reason.

The second doctrine concerns the authenticity of the prophetic traditions. There is a category of the traditions whose genuineness has been questioned by the scholars of tradition; some of them have been even proved to be spurious. But the mystics insist on their genuineness on the ground of their *kashf*. Though this is the general attitude of the mystics there shall be very few among them who, like Ibn Arabī, clearly state that they regard *kashf* as a means to prove the authenticity of an otherwise weak tradition, or expose the weakness of an otherwise genuine tradition[142]. The joint effect of these doctrines is the subjection of the prophetic intuition to the intuition of the mystic in spite of the theoretical primacy of the former. That is why Ibn 'Arabī is quite frank in asserting the primacy of mystic intuition in matters of Reality, of which he considers himself the most authentic and most clear exponent. This is the point in his claim that he is the Seal of the Saints,[143] and that the Seal of the Prophets acquires his knowledge through the Seal of the Saints[144].

Law *(Sharī'ah)* is the field of the prophet *(nabī)* or, to be precise, of the prophet who is a messanger *(rasūl)* and the saint *(walī)* has no standing there[145]. He has to follow the prophet just as any other Muslim. If he knows thoroughly the *Sharī'ah* and the principles of interpretation and deduction he can himself deduce new rules as a scholar-jurist does. However, Ibn 'Arabī finds some role for *kashf* in this field also. The mystic, he says, may discover through *kashf* whether a particular *ḥadīth* is or is not worth consideration in an argument[146]. In this manner and to this limited extent the saint may share in the legislative function of the prophet as his deputy *(nā'ib/khalīfah/wārith)*[147]. In the matters of Reality, on the other hand, the saint is not the deputy of the prophet but the direct deputy[148] of God, because he derives his knowledge from the same source from which the prophet draws his knowledge. This means that his intuitions are subject to no

authority on the earth, and if they are formally subjugated to the intuition of the prophet as said before that is a demand of his faith rather than a consequence of his knowledge of Reality.

Law is grounded in Reality. It is based on the universal nature of man, which is a part of every human being in essence as well as in existence. Obligation to the Law is also a part of the human nature: it is a self-imposed obligation. God does not enforce the Law from without, it is His own essence that obligates Him. Ibn 'Arabī discusses obligation in general terms, his remarks refer primarily to obligation with regard to universal principles of religion, morals and law. He does not specifically mention obligation in matters on which prophetic codes differ. But that should pose no particular difficulty. For he can well find out a place for obligation with regard ro particular codes, human or prophetic, in the essence of an individual who is addressed by that code. The essence of an individual consists not only of what the individual shall be in life but also what he should be. The mission of a prophet is to help man realize what he should be. He does not have to care whether or not an individual will actually realize his ideal self, or what he is actually destined to be. He is the servant of the legislative order *(al-amr al-tashrī'ī)* of God and not his creative order *(al-amr al-takwīnī)*[149].

The right from the point of view of man is that which serves his interests *(aghrāḍ)*, agrees with his nature *(ṭab')* and constitution *(mizāj)*, and wrong is that which conflicts with his interests and with his nature and constitution[150]. There is nothing right or wrong in itself, it is so always in relation to some thing else. Thus in his conception of good and right Ibn 'Arabī is a thoroughgoing relativist. How do we know what is good and right? Judging from various references in the *Fuṣūṣ* and the *Futūḥāt* relevant to this question, it seems that in this matter Ibn 'Arabī is a pluralist. He regards Revelation (*Shar'*), human reason *('aql)*[151] and social convention *('urf)*, all the three as ways of knowing good in their particular fields. He does not, however, elaborate.

Ibn 'Arabī is not concerned with the discussion of norms and values. He does not elaborate the concept of human nature, and hence no definite system of norms can be attributed to him. His concept of Perfect Man so far as it combines all the three basic forms of reality – intelligence, soul and matter – can bolster a comprehensive view of human ideal. His view that the human soul and body complement rather than oppose each other is a further support for a comprehensive system of values. There is only one factor there that may affect the scale of values. This is the factor of mystical discipline *(al-ṭarīqah)* that involves asceticism, renunciation and seclusion, and the practice of concentration and meditation leading to *fanā* and ecstasy. In other words, the doctrine of Reality which Ibn 'Arabī expounds is as such indifferent to norms, and can accommodate more than one system of values. If the values are oriented in a particular way that will be under the influence of extraneous factors such as mystical discipline and meditation.

Divine Justice

Ibn 'Arabī has two concepts of good and evil. One is essentially ethical and the other is metaphysical. In his writings the distinction between the two concepts is not clearly defined. This often creates confusion and opposes one against the other often to the weakening and erosion of the former. We have discussed the ethical concept above, we shall discuss the metaphysical concept now.

The fundamental idea of Ibn 'Arabī's metaphysical theory is that *wujūd* is good, and the lack of *wujūd* which is *'adam* (non-being) is evil[152]. This is essentially a Platonic idea, but in developing it Ibn 'Arabī has modified the idea in two important respects. According to Plato, the ideas are the most real and perfect form of being, and the objects of the world are their imperfect copies, consequently less real. Ibn 'Arabī's view is just the reverse. For him *wujūd* in its true sense is being that acts and reacts, the active and concrete existence. The idea is inactive and lifeless, the potential and not yet realized

existence. Hence it is an incomplete form of being. The second modification that Ibn 'Arabī introduces concerns the concept of non-being. In the Platonic tradition non-being is endowed with a power of resistance to being, and is indentified as matter, which partly explains why concrete beings are the imperfect images of ideas. Ibn 'Arabī, on the other hand, regards non-being as nothing more than the privation of being. He takes away from it the power of resistance and divests it of the role that it plays in Plato as an individuating factor. As a result, concrete forms are not the imperfect copies of ideas but their more perfect realizations.

In the metaphysical context good means perfection *(kamāl)* of being in a non-ethical sense. Of course, perfection is at times used in a moral sense, but its amoral use is not uncommon. From the ontological point of view the most perfect being or the most perfect good is God because He is the necessary being existing by Himself, because He embraces all beings in Himself and is qualified by all the attributes by which others are qualified irrespective of the fact whether they are good or bad in the judgment of ethics and religion. On this standard of perfection or goodness, defect or evil would mean dependence in being, limitedness and finitude[153]. Ibn 'Arabī writes: "The Great *(al-'Aliyy)* in himself is he who has the perfection that embraces all existing things, and all non-existing relations, without missing any attribute whether praised by the *Shar'*, reason or custom, or condemned by the *Shar'*, reason or custom. This greatness belongs to none except the one whose name is God"[154]. Also: "*Wujūd* as such *(al-wujūd al-muṭlaq)* is pure goodness, and *'adam* as such *(al-'adam al-muṭlaq)* is pure evil. The possible *(mumkināt)* are in between. So far as they participate in *wujūd* they are good, and so far as they participate in *'adam* (non-being) they are evil"[155].

A corollary of this metaphysical doctrine is that every existing thing is good, of course in varying degrees of goodness. This is independent of its characteristic as ethically good or bad which depends upon the effects that it exercises

upon other objects. Poison, for instance, is good in the ontological sense because it is something that exists; it is evil in an ethical sense because it destroys life[156]. Another corollary of the doctrine is that all actions without any reservation are good, because they are the expressions of *wujūd*. They become good and bad in an ethical sense when they are considered in relation to some beings. They are good when they promote the interest of somebody and bad when they harm. Steeling, murdering and disbelieving in God are good ontologically although they are evil in ethics and religion.

There is no bar against using good and evil in two different senses, ontological and ethical. But there are two great dangers involved in doing that. The first is that one is very likely to leave out qualifying phrases and create misgiving and confusion about what one really wants to say. The second is that one may mix up the two senses or concepts, oppose the metaphysical to the ethical and eventually weaken and undermine ethical and religious judgments. The former creates difficulty in understanding but the latter threatens the very existence of morality and religion. Ibn ʿArabī is guilty of both as we shall see.

According to him all that we believe, do or experience in life or in the life to come is part of our essences that subsist in Divine knowledge from eternity and are the uncreated essential modes of Divine Essence. God knows them from eternity but his knowledge does not affect them at all. His will follows His knowledge passively and brings out into existence what is there in essence, it has nothing to choose or prefer. Our beliefs and acts proceed from our essences, they are our beliefs and our acts, and we are responsible for them. If we enjoy blessings for our good deeds it is we who bless ourselves, and if we suffer from our evil deeds it is we who punish ourselves[157]. God does nothing except that he brings into existence our joys and sufferings, our rewards and punishments, as He brings into existence our beliefs and acts. In other words, we as essences demand for the existentialization of our bliss or sufferings and

God responds by bringing them into existence. He could not have done otherwise. Hence God is not at all responsible, it is we who are responsible for our destinies, our beliefs and acts and the blessings and sufferings that we experience on their account. This is what Ibn 'Arabī calls Divine Justice *(al-'adl al-Ilāhī)* or the mystery of Judgement *(sir al-dīn)*[158].

The essence of Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine so far as it concerns God is that God has no control over the essences of the individuals and has no choice except to bring them into existence. Therefore, He is not responsible for our destinies. If the basic premises of Ibn 'Arabī's philosophy are accepted his conclusion is unassailable. But the second part of his doctrine that we are responsible for our beliefs and acts and for the consequences, good or bad, that follow from them, is vulnerable on many counts. First of all, it is not right to say that our essences *(a'yān)* are ourselves. They are only God's ideas of ourselves in eternity with no power or will at all. Beliefs are our beliefs when we think over them and hold them, and acts are ours acts when we will and perform them. The beliefs and acts contained in our essences are not ours in this sense which is necessary to hold us responsible for them. Secondly, it is also not true that beliefs and acts proceed from our essences. They proceed as Ibn 'Arabī explains according to our essences but from the will of God. We have no will of our own other than the will of God. Ibn 'Arabī clearly says: "There is no doer *(fā'il)* except God". Thirdly, if God is not responsible because His will does not fashion our essences and only brings what they have into existence although the essences are His essential modes, we will be far less responsible for the so-called beliefs and acts of ours because we neither chose them in eternity nor do we effect them now. It is God who effects them in us.

Whatever may be the difficulties in Ibn 'Arabī's theory of responsibility and justice, it does not involve a problem of language. But when he begins to seek excuses for our wrong beliefs and misdeeds he starts mixing up the ethical and metaphysical categories. He distinguishes, and very rightly,

between the ethical command *(amr tashrī'ī)* of God and his existential command *(amr takwīnī)*. The former means what ought to happen with the implication that it may not happen. The latter means what actually happens whether or not it ought to have happened. It is clear that the concepts of faith *(īmān)* and unfaith *(kufr)*, obedience *(ṭā'ah)* and disobedience *(ma'ṣiyah)*, responsibility and accountability *(ḥisāb)*, reward *(thawāb)* and punishment *('iqāb)*, salvation *(sa'ādah)* and damnation *(shaqāwah)* all are related to the ethical command of God and not to the existential. But Ibn 'Arabī willfully uses these words in the latter sense along with the former and often contradicts himself.

At one place, for instance, he would say that sin is a violation of the ethical command as obedience is its carrying out: "The command of God when violated by an act that we call sin *(ma'ṣiyah)* is the indirect command of God *(al-amr bi'l-wāsiṭah)*, another word for *amr tashrī'ī* (which reaches us through a prophet) and not the existential command. Nobody ever violates God in whatever one does so far as the command of *mashīyah* (another name for *amr takwīnī*) is concerned"[159]. This implies that obedience also concerns the ethical command. But he would not restrict himself to this. "Every one [the sinner and the saint] walks on the straight path of the Lord, and therefore neither deserves the wrath of God nor is he gone astray"[160]. Not only this but also: "Everyone is right *(muṣīb)* and all right-doers deserve reward *(ma'jūr)* and all who deserve reward are blessed *(sa'īd)*, and God shall be pleased with all the blessed ones, even if some have to suffer in Hell"[161].

On the theme of blessedness *(sa'ādah)* he further writes:

> Blessed is he who is liked by his Lord. But there is no one there who is not liked by his Lord since His Lordship blesses him in bringing him (in existence and keeping in existence). He is therefore liked and blessed. ... Every one who is liked is loved, and all that the loved ones do is also loved. Hence every act is loved. For no act is the act of the

> *'ayn* (essence or idea) but of the Lord of the *'ayn*. The *'ayn* is satisfied that the act is ascribed to it and hence it is pleased with what appears in it and out of it by the act that is done by its Lord. And the acts are approved, for every doer and maker is happy with his doing and his creation[162].

This mixing up of the metaphysical and the ethical categories and this play on words is not incidental but the deliberate act of Ibn 'Arabī. There are two things that lead up to this. One is his compassion for all including the willful sinner and the obstinate infidel that makes fun of morality and religion. The other is a tacit admission that our beliefs and acts are not of our own choice, we are rather compelled to hold or do them. We should be, therefore, excused. The sense of compulsion *(jabr)* comes up in the following passages where Ibn 'Arabī tries to change the very meaning of Hell and turn it into a Paradise:

> God will drive them to *Jahannam* (a name of Hell) that is to a distant place which they were thinking of. When He drives them to this place they will enter into the heart of nearness *(qurb)*. Thus the distance will vanish for them and with that will vanish the object called *Jahannam*. They will then enjoy the blessings of nearness which they will deserve because they are sinners. God will not bestow upon them this position of pleasant experience as a favour. They would get it because of the reality of the deeds they were engaged in would earn it. In doing what they did they were on the straight path of their Lord because their reins were in the hands of the One who possesses this attribute (of Lordship). Hence they did not walk because of their will *(bi-nafsihim)*, they walked because they were compelled *(bi-ḥukm al-jabr)* till they reached the heart of nearness *(qurb)*. 'We are nearer to it than you but you do not realize'[163].

And the excuse of the sinner which follows upon the realization of compulsion emerges in this passage:

The seer who perceives this truth puts up excuse for all existent beings, even if they themselves do not do it. He knows that whatever is in them is from Him[164].

Notes and References

1. For the life of Ibn *'Arabī* see Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi'l-Wafayāt* (Weisbaden: Faranz Steiner Verlag, 1962), 4: 173-8; Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-i'tidāl fi Naqd al-Rijāl* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutūb al-'Arabiyyah, 1382/1962), 3: 158ff; Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, 1951), 3: 478-82; 'Afīf al-Dīn al-Yāfi'ī, *Mir'āt al-Jinān* (Hyderabad: Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-Niẓāmiyyah, 1339 AH), 4: 100ff; Ismā'īl ibn 'Umar ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Rayyān li'l-Turāth, 1408/1988), 13: 156; Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Lisān al-Mīzān* (Hyderabad: Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-Niẓāmiyyah, 1329-31/ 1911-13), 5: 311-5; 'Abd al-Ḥayy ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Qudsī, 1351 AH), 5: 190-202; 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* (Cairo: al-Ḥalabī, 1954), 1: 149, 188; 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-Uns* (Lucknow: Nawalkishor, 1328/1910), 492-504; Muḥammad Rajab Ḥilmī, *al-Burhān al-Aẓhar fī Manāqib al-Shaykh al-Akbar* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Sa'adah, 1326 AH); Asin Palacios, *Ibn 'Arabī*, Arab. tr. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Badawī (Cairo: Maktabah Anjalo, 1965); Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages* (Harward: Harward University Press, 2nd print, 1969), 83-100
2. In the opinion of the writer of the article of Ibn 'Arabī in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* (new ed.) Ibn 'Arabī did not meet Abū Madyan. That also seems to be the view of A.E. Affifi in his book, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhiyud Din Ibnul Arabi* (Lahore: Ashraf Publications), 178; 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Badwī, on the other hand, thinks that he met Abū Madyan, see *al-Kitāb al-Tadhkāri Muhīy'l-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī*, ed., Ibrāhīm Madkūr (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1389/1969), 12

3. For the *Ṭarīqah Akbariyyah* see the article on it by Abu'l-Wafā' al-Taftāzānī in *al-Kitāb al-Tadhkāri Muḥīy'l-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī*, 295-356
4. Muḥīy 'l-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah al-Kubrā, n.d.), 2: 871, 411. All future reference will be to this edition, except otherwise mentioned. See also A.E. Affifi, *The mystical Philosophy of Muhiyuddin Ibnul Arabī*, 130-31, and his *Ta'līqāt* on *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* of Ibn 'Arabī which he has edited (Cario: al-Ḥalabī, 1946), 74
5. Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. ed., A.E Affifi (Cairo: al-Ḥalabī, 1946), *faṣṣ*, 1, pp. 51-53
6. Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 4: 268; 'Affīfī, *Ta'līqāt*, 291
7. Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 167; 4: 190
8. Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī, Commentry on the *Fuṣūṣ* entitled *Maṭla' Khuṣūṣ al-Kalim fī Ma'ānī Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, manuscript 1339, introduction (*muqaddamah)*; Baḥr al-'Ulūm, *al-Risālah al-Ṣughrā fī Waḥdat al-Wujūd*, manuscript, Riḍa Library, Rampur
9. Ibn 'Arabī, Inshā' al-Dawā'ir and other Treatises, ed., H.S. Nyberg (Leiden: Birll, 1919), 20
10. Qayṣarī, *Maṭla'*, opt-cit, Introduction Ibn 'Arabī, *Inshā al-Dawā'īr*, 4
11. Qayṣarī, *Maṭla'*, introduction
12. Jāmī, *al-Durar al-Fākhirah*, manuscript, Nadwat al-'Ulamā' Library, Lucknow,5
13. Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1: 131
14. Ibn 'Arabī, *Inshā' al-Dawāir*, 14. Ibn 'Arabī, *Kitāb al-Aḥadīyah*, included in the collection of *Rasā'il Ibn al-'Arabī*, originally from Hyderabad, facsimile ed. Beirut, p.65
15. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 1, p.55
16. *Futūḥāt*, 3: 740
17. Al-Qayṣarī, *Maṭla'*, introduction.

18. For the difference between Ibn 'Arabī's *tajallī* and Plotinus' emanation see Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhīyid Dīn Ibnul 'Arabī*, 59-65
19. *Futūḥāt*, I: 261-2
20. An implicit reference to them is in *Futūḥāt* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir , n.d.), 3: 372, 453
21. *Futūḥāt*, 3: 520, 4: 23
22. Jāmī, *Lawā'iḥ* (Nawalkishor, 1936), 18
23. *Futūḥāt*, 4: 56; Bālī Afandī, Commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* (Maṭba'at al-Usāmah, 1309 AH), 211
24. Walī Allāh, *al-Khayr al-Kathīr* (Surat: al-Majlis al-'Ilmī, 1355/1955), 18
25. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 4, p.77
26. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 2, p67; *Futūḥāt*, 3: 468; *Inshā' al-Dawā'ir*, 10
27. *Futūḥāt*, 4: 11; 2: 285
28. *Ibid.*, 2: 409, 410
29. *Ibid.*, 3: 468
30. *Ibid.*, 4: 11
31. *Ibid.*, I: 90-91
32. *Ibid.*, 3: 523, I: 189-90
33. *Ibid.*, 4: 101, 102
34. *Ibid.*, 4: 268
35. *Ibid.*, 3: 561
36. *Ibid.*, 4: 101
37. *Ibid.*, 4: 268; 'Affīfī, *al-Ta'līqāt*, 292
38. *Futūḥāt*, 4: 23; 2: 411; 1: 162
39. *Ibid.*, 4: 22
40. Abu 'l-Ḥasan, al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn*, ed., M. Muḥīy 'l-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍah, 1950), 1: 227
41. *Ibid.*, 1: 224
42. *Ibid.*, 1: 225; al-Shahristānī, *al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal*, ed., 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Wakīl (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Ḥalabī, 1287/1968), 1: 49-50
43. Al-Sharrastānī, *al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal*, 1:82
44. *Ibid.*, 1:95

45. Al-Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat al-Iqdām*, ed., Alfred Guillame (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Muthannā, n.d.), 131
46. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 20, p.178
47. *Futūḥāt*, 3: 523
48. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 20, p.179
49. *Futūḥāt*, 3: 523; 4: 21, 1: 165, 168
50. *Ibid.*, 4: 20
51. *Ibid.*, 4:196
52. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ḥalabī, 1956), 1: 76
53. *Ibid.*, 1: 76
54. *Futūḥāt*, 1: 90
55. *Ibid.*, 4: 20, 284-5
56. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 14, 132
57. *Futūḥāt*, 4: 332
58. *Ibid.*, 3: 713
59. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 19, p. 172
60. *Ibid, faṣṣ*, 5, p.83
61. *Futūḥāt*, 1: 163; *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 5, p. 83
62. *Ibid.*, 2: 98
63. *Inshā' al-Dawā'ir*, 9
64. *Futūḥāt*, 3: 468
65. *Ibid.*, 1: 163
66. *Ibid.*, 4: 268
67. *Ibid.*, 4: 285
68. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 2, p. 134
69. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 8, p. 96
70. *Futūḥāt*, 4: 23
71. *Ibid.*, 4: 116
72. *Ibid.*, 2: 285-6
73. *Ibid.*, 4: 269
74. *Ibid.*, 4: 169
75. *Ibid.*, 3: 959
76. *Ibid.*, 3: 614
77. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 16, 157
78. *Futūḥāt*, 4: 360
79. *Ibid.*, 3: 299

80. *Ibid.*, 4: 26
81. *Ibid.*, 4: 24
82. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 2, 3, pp. 188-9
83. *Futūḥāt*, 2: 71
84. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 4, p.79
85. *Futūḥāt*, 4: 317
86. *Ibid.*, 4: 168
87. *Ibid.*, 4: 116
88. *Ibid.*, 4: 129
89. *Ibid.*, 4: 323
90. *Ibid.*, 4: 168
91. *Ibid.*, 4: 330
92. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 9, p.103. In *Futūḥāt*, 1:262. We have: "All that we perceive or know is the existence of God in the *a'yān* of contingent things. In virtue of God's existence the world is Divine Existence, and in virtue of varying forms that appear in it (Divine Existence) it is the *a'yān* of contingent things".
93. *Futūḥāt*, 1: 262
94. *Ibid.*, 3: 535-6
95. Jāmī, *Lawā'iḥ*, 16
96. *Futūḥāt*, 3: 536
97. *Ibid.*, 4: 169
98. *Ibid.*, 3: 536
99. *Ibid.*, 4: 7
100. *Ibid.*, (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir), Vol.3, chap.272, p.452
101. *Futūḥāt*, 1: 279
102. *Ibid.*, 2: 73
103. *Ibid.*, 2: 328
104. *Futūḥāt*, 2: 73
105. *Ibid.*, 4: 24
106. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 9, p.103
107. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 10, p.108
108. *Futūḥāt*, 3: 599
109. *Ibid.*, 4: 192
110. Walīy Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-Ilāhīyah* (Surat: al-Majlis al-'Ilmī), 2: 28-29

111. Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), 3: 399
112. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 15, p.144
113. *Futūḥāt*, 3: 413
114. *Ibid.*, 2: 71
115. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 12, pp.124-6
116. *Futūḥāt*, 1: 183
117. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 12, p. 183
118. *Futūḥāt*, 2: 56
119. *Ibid.*, 3: 408
120. *Ibid.*, 3: 438
121. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 12, p. 125, *faṣṣ*, 14, p. 133
122. *Ibid.*, *faṣṣ*, 3, p. 68
123. *Ibid.*, *faṣṣ*, 3, pp. 181-2
124. *Futūḥāt*, 3: 907
125. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 12, pp. 122-3
126. *Futūḥāt*, 3: 631-2; 2: 385; *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 22, pp. 180-2
127. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 21, p. 128; *faṣṣ*, 27, p. 226; *Futūḥāt* (Beirut), 4: 112
128. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 10, p. 113. Referring to Ghazālī's rationalistic thought Ibn 'Arabī writes: "In our view there is no error committed by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī greater than the error that he discusses the Essence of God in rational terms in his *al-Madnūn bihī 'alā Ghayr Ahlihī* and other works. As a result he was wrong in all the he said. He failed to arrive at the truth. In this field whatever Abū Ḥāmid and others have said is the abyss of ignorance: (*Futūḥāt*, 3: 609)
129. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 25, p. 204; *Futūḥāt*, 4: 57
130. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 22, pp. 180-81
131. *Ibid.*, *faṣṣ*, 27, p. 225
132. *Futūḥāt*, 2: 383
133. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 1, p. 55
134. *Ibid.*, *faṣṣ*, 12, pp. 120-1
135. *Futūḥāt*, 2: 653
136. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 10, p. 111
137. *Futūḥāt*, 2: 109

138. See the Commentary *(Ta'līqāt)* of A.E. Affifi on the *Fuṣūṣ* (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, 'Isā Ḥalabī, 1365/1946), 185
139. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 24, pp. 195-6
140. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 10, p. 135
141. *Futūḥāt*, 1: 282, 287
142. *Futūḥāt*, (Beirut), Vol.2, chap. 156, p. 154
143. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 2, pp. 62-64; *Futūḥāt*, (Beirut), 1: 319
144. *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, ed., A.E. Affifi with commentary *(Ta'līqāt), faṣṣ*, 2, p. 62 and *Ta'līqāt*, 24-25
145. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 2. pp. 62-3, *faṣṣ*, 14, pp. 134-5
146. *Futūḥāt*, (Beirut), Vol.2, chap. 156, p. 254
147. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 17, p. 162; *faṣṣ*, 14, pp. 135
148. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 17, p. 163
149. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 8, p. 97
150. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 11, p. 118
151. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 25, p. 201
152. *Futūḥāt*, 3: 690
153. *Futūḥāt*, 3: 414
154. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 4, p. 79
155. *Futūḥāt*, (Beirut), Vol.3, chap. 394, p. 556
156. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 27, pp. 221-2; *Futūḥāt*, (Beirut) Vol. 4, chap. 558, pp. 256-7
157. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 8, p. 96; *faṣṣ*, 5, p. 83
158. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 8, p. 96; *faṣṣ*, 13, p. 130
159. *Fuṣūṣ, faṣṣ*, 17, p. 165
160. *Ibid., faṣṣ*, 10, p. 165
161. *Ibid., faṣṣ*, 10, p. 114
162. *Ibid., faṣṣ*, 7, pp. 90-91
163. *Ibid., faṣṣ*, 10, p. 108
164. *Ibid., faṣṣ*, 10, p. 108

Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī: Doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Shuhūd*

The doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* as Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240) formulated it provoked strong reaction from theologians as well as sufis. The most prominent figures among the former group were the great *salafī* scholar, Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1327), and the famous Ash'arite theologian Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 793/1390), and the most eminent among the latter group were the famous Khurasanian saint, 'Alā' al-Dawlah al-Simnānī (d. 736/1336), and the renowned Naqshbandī sufi and revivalist (*mujaddid*), Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1034/1624) of India.

Simnānī's major work, *al-'Urwah li Ahl al-Khalwah*, has not been studied. However, from the letter which he wrote in reply to the letter of 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kayshī (d. 730/1330), one of the most popular commentators of the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* of Ibn 'Arabī, and which has been reproduced by Jāmī in his *Nafaḥāt al-Uns*, the main points of his criticism of *waḥdat al-wujūd* that appear are two: One, if the being *(wujūd)* of God is one with the being of the world, everything however evil and filthy shall have to be identified with God. Referring to Ibn 'Arabī's opening words in the *Futūḥāt*, "Glory to the One who brings out everything (in the world) and is (at the same time) one with it", Simnānī remarks: "If you hear someone saying that the excretion of Zayd is one with Zayd, you will not forgive him. You will certainly be furious with him. How then if similar words are said of God"?[1]

The second point which Simnānī makes is that in the beginning of the mystical journey it is not unusual among the sufis to identify the being of God with the being of the world.

But in the end they go beyond that stage and no longer identify God with the world. Instead, they affirm His absolute transcendence, and about themselves they claim nothing more than that they are merely the servants of God. Simnānī tells his own story. In the beginning of his *sulūk*, he says, he claimed union with God and identified the world with Him, but when he reached the end of the journey he realized that this was not true. The truth, on the contrary, is that God transcends the world completely. This comes out in the second part of his letter to Kayshī which he wrote supplementing his first brief reply. I will translate the relevant portions here:

> When I read the letter the second time, and came upon the quatrain of Kayshī[2] (mentioned in it), I remembered that what was revealed to him at that stage and gave him so much pleasure had been also revealed to me. Sometimes in the beginning I had that experience too, and enjoyed it very much. But I passed that stage. When I went beyond the initial and the middle stages of enlightenment *(mukāshfah)* and reached the final stage of enlightenment, the erroneous nature of the earlier enlightenment became as clear to me as the light of the sun. At this stage I got the true certitude that was beyond all doubts....
>
> In the middle stage of enlightenment I received ideas like the ones that are expressed in the quatrain of Kayshī. At that stage God appeared to me like a river surging with waves, giving life to some and killing others. Creatures, on the other hand, appeared in the form of circles, some wide and some narrow. Some were happy and their joy was a reflection of God's mercy on them corresponding to the width of their circles and the duration of their persistence. Others were miserable, and their misery was a reflection of God's wrath corresponding to the narrowness of their circles and the duration of their survival. As the giver of life, the river was establishing some circles, and as destroyer of life, it was wiping out others, and as vibrating with waves, it was producing new ones. But when I

reached the final enlightenment, the wind of true certitude *(ḥaqq al-yaqīn)* blew and smashed the flowers of the initial and middle stages into pieces. There appeared true certitude breaking the cover of the certitude of vision.

My dear! Pure unmixed knowledge that corresponds completely to the reality agrees with the *Sharī'ah*. The certitude of knowledge *('ilm al-yaqīn)* appears in the initial enlightenment, the certitude of vision *('ayn al-yaqīn)* appears in the middle enlightenment, and true certitude *(ḥaqq al-yaqīn)* appears in the final enlightenment. The ideas of the true certitude *(ḥaqq al-yaqīn)* which form certitude pure and simple as referred in the verse, "Serve your Lord till certitude comes to you" (Q:15:99), belong to the heart of enlightenment. When one attains to it, every word that he says agrees completely with reality.

You have mentioned that the last station of mystical journey as stated in the *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn* is the experience of unity *(tawḥīd)*. This is not correct. Its author was stationed at the eightieth station. The last, hundredth station, is the station of *'ubūdīyah*, servant hood, that is, the return of the mystic to the beginning, passing through all the intermediary stages of sainthood *(walāyah)* and moving with God through all His theophanies. Junayd was asked: "What is the end of this journey"? He said: "Return to the beginning".

My dear! In the beginning and the middle of the unitive experience *(tawḥīd)*, particularly at the time of audition, I had often given the singer *(qawwāl)* some quatrains to sing and enjoyed the sweetness of their melody for long. One of these quatrains was:

This I is not me; if it is You are it.
Whatever cloth is on me is You.
In Your love neither body is left to me nor soul,
For the body or the soul which is mine is You.

At that stage when *ḥulūl*, indwelling, was infidelity *(kufr)* and *ittiḥād*, union/oneness, was *tawḥīd*. I had sung:

I am the One I love, and the One I love is me.
There is nothing in the mirror other than us.
The composer missed the truth when he said:
We are two spirits that reside in one body.
He affirms the existence of another
Who makes a distinction between us,
I do not call Him, nor do I remember Him.
My call and my remembrance are: O I!

And so on to the end. After that when I reached the end of the unitive experience I realized that it was pure illusion. I said to myself: Return to the truth is better than persistence in untruth. My dear! You too should follow the same course.[3]

Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī subjected the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* to a detailed criticism, on mystical as well as scriptural grounds. Like Simnānī, he also pointed out that the experience of union or oneness is only a stage in the journey of the sufi, not the end. He should continue his march, go beyond that stage, realize the transcendence of God, and reaffirm his own servanthood. For Sirhindī, too, it was a matter of personal experience, not merely an academic proposition. He passed through all the stages which Simnānī had described and reached the end. We will elaborate on these points in the pages that follow.

But Sirhindī accomplished something more. Consistent with his experiences he formulated a doctrine to replace the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, which was called *waḥdat al-shuhūd* or *tawḥīd shuhūdī* and is associated with his name. We have stated this doctrine very briefly in our earlier work, *Sufism and Sharī'ah*[4]. We will discuss it in detail here.

Life and Mystical Development

Shaykh Aḥmad was born at Sirhind, some eighty miles north-west of Delhi, on Fridy the 14th Sahwwāl 971, 26th May 1564, eight years after the great Mughal ruler Akbar ascended the throne. He received his early education from his father, Shaykh 'Abd al-Aḥad (d. 1007/1598) and the local teachers of Sirhind, and committed the Qur'ān to memory. He was then sent to Mullā Kamāl, a friend of his father, at Sialkot for the study of theology and philosophy, and Mullā Ya'qūb Charkhī, the author of a commentary on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhaīī. Mullā Kamāl was a renowned scholar of rational desciplines and the teacher of the famous theologian 'Abd al-Ḥakīm Sialkotī (d. 1067/1656) who was a classmate of Sirhindī. Sirhindī studied advanced texts on *Tafsīr* and *Ḥadīth* with Qāḍī Bahlūl Badakhshānī. After completing his education at the age of seventeen he returned to Sirhind, and began to assist his father in teaching the students of his school.

Three years later in 991/1503 he left for Agra where he taught at a school, and established contacts with some scholars of Akbar's court like Fayḍī (d. 1014/1605), Abu'l-Faḍl (d. 1011/1602) and the historian Badāyūnī (d. circa 1024/1615). This gave him the opportunity to know at first hand what changes were taking place in the attitude and thinking of the members of the royal court regarding Islam. The famous *Maḥḍar Nāmah* investing Akbar with the powers to interpret the *Sharī'ah* and to promulgate new laws, over and above the temporal authority he had, had already been presented (987/1579) by the *'ulamā'* of the court under the leadership of Mullā Mubārak, the father of Fayḍī and Abu'l-Faḍl. Next year Akbar was declared the founder and the high priest of a new Divine Religion *(Dīn Ilāhī)*. Attack on the fundamental tenets of Islam such as prophecy and the life hereafter, and effort to replace the *Sharī'ah* law by laws borrowed from various sources started. The necessity of prophecy was questioned and the finality of Muḥammad's prophethood was denied.

Sirhindī was alarmed at this situation. In his first book, *Ithbāt al-Nubuwwah* (Defence of Prophecy), which he wrote at this time he observed: "I saw that people were questioning prophecy in general, and doubting the prophecy of some particular prophets. I saw them defying the *Sharī'ah* that the Prophet had given. This trend had grown so strong that people in power were persecuting religious scholars and causing them indescribable hardship and suffering, simply because they were sincere followers of the *Sharī'ah* and true believers in the Prophets"[5]. He described the views of a leader of this anti-Islam campaign in the following words:

> Prophecy is essentially a matter of prudence, an effort to secure human welfare and regulate social relations, prevent disputes and quarrels among people and restrain them from indulgence in pleasure. Prophecy has nothing to do with future salvation. Its sole object is to promote noble character, good behaviour and higher virtues which have been elaborated by philosophers in their books.

Sirhindī criticized this rather mundane concept of prophecy and expounded a more comprehensive view in his book. With regard to the prophecy of Muḥammad (peace be on him) he wote:

> The mission of Muḥámmad in the light of his preaching and work was the perfection of man's intellectual and practical powers by cultivating right beliefs and good behaviour, and removing the maladies of his heart and the darkness of his soul.[6]

Shaykh 'Abd al-Aḥad visited Agra and found his son completely disgusted and disillusioned. He brought him back to Sirhind. On the way at Thaneswar, he married Sirhindī to the daughter of a rich member of the nobility. Back in his native town, Sirhindī started assisting his father in teaching, and took up the study of sufi texts like the *Ta'arruf* of Kalābādhī, the *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* of Suhrawardī, and the *Fuṣūṣ* of Ibn 'Arabī. His father was a good scholar of religious desciplines and *taṣawwuf*. At an early age, he went to the famous Chishtī saint

Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs of Gangoh (d. 991/1503) for *bay'ah* but was sent back home to develop his knowledge of the *Sharī'ah* and the traditions of the Prophet. After many years of study and travel throughout northern India, he returned to Gangoh. But the Shaykh had died and his son Rukn al-Dīn initiated him in the Chishtī order. Shaykh 'Abd al-Aḥad also received training in other orders of Sufism. Sirhindī studied sufi texts with his father and practiced sufism under his instruction. In his book *Mabda' wa Ma'ād* he writes:

> I got the *nisbat fardīyah* through my father who had got it through a revered sufi, intensely ecstatic and famous for his miracles. ... I also developed a taste for supererogatory works *(nawāfil)* particularly supererogatory prayers through my father who had got it through his teacher, a Chishtī saint[7].

Shaykh 'Abd al-Aḥad was deeply conscious of the shortcomings of the sufis, and tried to make his son conscious of the wrongs which they were doing to Islam. Sirhindī refers to it when he writes: "I have heard from my father that out of the seventy sects [of the *Ummah*] that have gone astray the majority is from the sufis who did not complete their *sulūk*, indulged in wrong methods and went astray"[8]. However, Shaykh 'Abd al-Aḥad was a firm believer in *waḥdat al-wujūd* though he was not a servile follower of Ibn 'Arabī. Sirhindī mentions that he tried to accord the world an independence which it did not have in Ibn 'Arabī's system[9]. Sirhindī was too young to follow the discussion of his father on this point. But he could well see the independence of his father's mind in speculative matters and must have been impressed by it.

After the death of his father in 1007/1598 Sirhindī came to Delhi on way to *ḥajj*. There, he came in contact with Shaykh Bāqī bi-Allāh (d. 1012/1603), the first Naqshbandī saint who visited India. On the persuation of the Shaykh, Sirhindī agreed to spend some time with him. He was so impressed by the Shaykh that he offered his hand for *bay'ah*. Within a short time he attained to what is known as the *nisbat Naqshbandīyah* and

then the real self-annihilation *(fanā' ḥaqīqī)* which is called the stage of *ḥaqq al-yaqīn* or *jam' al-jam'*[10]. He continued till he reached the stage of *farq ba'd al-jam'*, which in Shaykh Bāqī bi-Allāh's assessment was 'the culmination of human effort' and the stage of perfection *(maqām-i-takmīl)*[11]. The Shaykh was very much impressed by the wonderful progress of his disciple. In a letter to a friend he wrote:

> A man from Sirhind named Shaykh Aḥmad has recently come. He is very learned and has great practical powers. He has stayed with me for some days; on the basis of what I have seen of him in this period, I hope that in future he will be a lamp that will enlighten the world[12].

Within the next four years Sirhindī visited his Shaykh twice. On the second occasion when he was to return to Sirhind, Shaykh Bāqī bi-Allāh appointed him his *Khalīfah*, deputy, asked him to take up the task of spiritual instruction *(irshād)* and gave some disciples in his charge. Sirhindī hesitated to accept the responsibility but the Shaykh testified to his attainments and his preparation for the task[13]. The third and the last time Sirhindī visited his Shaykh was a little before the latter's death in 1012/1603. At this time the Shaykh entrusted his own sons to him for instruction.[14]

Sirhindī has described his mystical development at various places. The following is a short account of the first stage of his experience:

> I believed in the *tawḥīd wujūdī* from the time I was a boy. My father apparently believed in the doctrine, and used to carry out spiritual exercises on *wujūdī* lines. But in spite of that he was able to maintain in his innermost self *(al-akhfā)* a state of indeterminateness *(martabah bi-kayf)*. As the saying goes, the son of a jurist is half jurist, I knew the doctrine very well, and appreciated and enjoyed it. Later on when God brought me to Shaykh Bāqī bi-Allāh and he taught me the Naqshbandī *ṭarīqah* and attended closely to my developments, the Unity of Being *(tawḥīd wujūdī)* was revealed to me in a short period in virtue of following the

Naqshbandī *ṭarīqah*. I was completely absorbed in that experience and the ideas *(ma'ārif)* associated with it began to pour in on me. There was hardly a truth that was not revealed to me. I was informed of the profoundest ideas of Shaykh Muḥīy'l-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine, and I was blessed with the experience of Divine Self-illumination *(tajallī dhātī)* which the author of the *Fuṣūṣ* had said to be the culmination of spiritual ascent, and beyond which there was nothing, according to him, except pure non-being. I also came to know in detail the truths of that manifestation *(tajallī)* which the Shaykh had claimed to be a privilege of the 'Seal of the Saints'. I was so engrossed in that *tawḥīd* and intoxicated with it that in one of my letters to my preceptor *(khawājah)* I wrote the two following couplets which were the product of sheer intoxication *(sukr)*:

This Sharī'ah, alas, is the way of the blind,
Our way is the way of infidels and fire-worshippers.
Infidelity and faith are the lock and the face of that Beauty,
In our way infidelity and faith are one and the same.

This condition persisted for sometime. Sirhindī describes the next stage of his mystical development as follows:

After some time I had a new vision of things which dominated my consciousness. But I hesitated at first to revise my attitude towards *tawḥīd wujūdī* in difference to rather than in disregard for that doctrine. For long I remained in that state of indecision. At last, I was induced to renounce the doctrine. I was shown that *tawḥīd wujūdī* was a lower stage, and I was asked to move to the stage of *ẓillīyat* (i.e. the vision that things are shadows (*ẓill*) of God and different from Him). But I did not like to move from that stage as many great sufis were stationed there. But I had no choice. I was brought to the stage of *ẓillīyat* where I realized that I and the world were shadows.

I wished I had not moved again from the stage of *ẓillīyat* because it had an affinity with *waḥdat al-wujūd*, which was still a symbol of perfection for me. But it happened

that God by a pure act of grace and love carried me beyond that stage and brought me to the stage of *'abdīyat* [the vision that man is nothing more than an *'abd*, servant of God, that things are merely His creation, and that He is absolutely other and different from the world]. I realized the greatness of that stage and scaled its lofty heights. I regretted my earlier experiences, returned to God and begged for His mercy. Had I not been guided in this manner and shown the greatness of one stage after the other, I would have remained at the stage of *tawḥīd wujūdī* because in my view there was no stage higher than that. God alone establishes the truth and shows the way[16].

Sirhindī had passed these three stages before he was forty. During the next twenty years he worked on a theosophy that would be true to his experience, and explained and defended it against criticism. The first formulation of his doctrine is variously called *tawḥīd shuhūdī, waḥdat al-shuhūd* or *zillīyat*. The first two terms refer to the negative aspect of his doctrine, whereas the last term refers to the positive aspect. In essence, the doctrine means that the identity of the existence of God and the world which a mystic perceives in his experience is true as a fact of his vision *(shuhūd)* but it is not true as a proposition about reality. Moreover, the mystic has this vision of identity only in the first stage of his experience. At later stages he comes to see that God is completely different from the world. He is different from the world, first, in the sense that the world is a being separate from God, and, second, in the sense that it is of a lower order of being as compared to God. God is the real Being *(wujūd aṣlī)*, rather He alone is being in the real sense, whereas the world is only a shadow being *(wujūd ẓillī)*. Hence the term *ẓillīyat* or shadow-ism.

But *ẓillīyat* is not the final doctrine of Sirhindī. A shadow is different from its original but since it is a copy of the original it is also in a sense one with the original. Hence *ẓillīyat* is not the proper term for describing the absolute otherness of God. Sirhindī, therefore, abandons the term in his later writings and

uses the Qur'ānic terms, *'abdīyat* (servanthood) and *khalq* (creation) to emphasise the absolute transcendence of God – the former term in the context of man, and the latter in the context of the world. The difference, however, between *ẓillīyat* and *'abdīyat* is more than a matter of terminology as we shall see.

There are three aspects of Sirhindī's philosophy: One is a criticism of Ibn 'Arabī's *waḥdat al-wujūd* on scriptural as well as rational grounds. With the first aspects of this criticism, however, we shall not be concerned here. We may take it up while discussing the arguments from scriptural texts for a particular view of reality which is based on mystical experience. Sirhindī's rational criticism is directed against Ibn 'Arabī's deterministic view of the Divine and the human will and many other concepts. But its main object is the doctrine of identity of God's existence with the existence of the world.

The second part of Sirhindī's philosophy centres around the concept of the shadow being of the world and how it proceeds from the Real Being of God. Though Sirhindī operates with the terminology of the *wujūdī* philosophy he succeeds in working out a completely different system, unique in the history of Islamic thought. Since the language which Sirhindī uses is borrowed from Ibn 'Arabī, and since he has worked his ideas in stages, and since he has chosen an unsuitable medium for expounding his philosophy, *viz.*, the medium of letters, it has been very difficult to understand his real views and distinguish them from those of Ibn 'Arabī. Our main task here will be to expound his ideas and to show how they differ from the views of his predecessor.

The third aspect of Sirhindī's thought is historical. He tries to show that the statements of the earlier sufis like Abū Yazīd, Shiblī and Abū Sa'īd Abu'l-Khayr, may seem to many people anticipations of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, but it is not ture. They are mystical utterances rather than philosophical statements, and their right understanding will be on *shuhūdī* rather than *wujūdī*

lines. I wish I had discussed this aspect at length, but for fear that it would prolong this article I would not enter into it.

Sirhindī not only formulated an alternative system of sufi theosophy, which is in itself a great achievement, but also did many things more. He reviewed the history of sufi ideas and practices and subjected those elements which he did not find in agreement with the Prophetic *Sharī'ah* to a bold criticism which is very rare in the sufi tradition. Again, Sirhindī is perhaps the first sufi to distinguish between the spiritual discipline taught by the Prophet (*ṭarīq nubūwat*) and the one developed by the sufis (*ṭarīq walāyat*). Even though he did not go very far in this field, he deserves the credit for initiating a process which was carried further by Shāh Walī Allāh (d. 1176/1762), and perfected by Shāh Ismā'īl (d. 1246/1830).

A third achievement of Sirhindī with which we shall be concerned here is a critical examination of the mystic experience. Mystics in general are not inclined to discuss the nature, genesis, motivation and the knowledge-yielding value of mystic experience. The way Sirhindī accomplished this task raises him far above other mystics of Islam. On this horizon he shines as a lone star.

It is mostly due to the efforts of Sirhindī that the Naqshbandī order spread in India and influenced the course of other sufi orders in bringing them closer to Prophetic practices. Through a number of disciples whom Sirhindī trained and sent to different parts of India he did a great deal in reforming the life of the people. The extent of his role in arresting the trend initiated by the Mughal ruler Akbar, and re-establishing the authority of the *Sharī'ah* in the government of the country has been controversial. But his solid contribution in this direction can hardly be disputed. Due to his services in renewing Islamic concepts and promoting Islamic life he has been called the Renewer of Faith of the Second Millennium *(Mujaddid Alf Thānī).*

The main source for Sirhindī's thought is his published letters which he wrote over a period of twenty-two years or

more to different people: his master Shaykh Bāqī bi-AllAh, his sons, disciples, sons of his master, sufis of different affiliations, *'ulamā'*, members of the nobility and rulers. Some of these letters are very short, hardly a page, but some are as long as sixty pages of big quarter size, almost a small book. They have been put in three volumes. The first volume was compiled in 1025/1616 and consists of three hundred thirty-three letters; the second volume was compiled in 1028/1619 and consists of ninety-nine letters and the third volume was compiled in 1030/1621 which consists of one hundred and fourteen letters. Later on ten other letters were added to the volume, of which the first nine were confirmed as genuine by Sirhindī's son Shaykh Ma'ṣūm (d. 1079/1668). Not all letters have been put in these volumes according to the date of their writing. In the case of a few at least we have reasons to believe that they were written earlier but put after the ones written later.

Criticism of *waḥdat al-wujūd*

We shall outline here Sirhindī's criticism of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, without going into a discussion of its merits or demerits. Our purpose is to provide an insight into the working of Sirhindī's mind and his approach to the problems we are concerned with here. This will help us to understand the magnitude of the difference which Sirhindī perceives between his position and that of Ibn 'Arabī. It will also, I hope, disparage the tendency among the later sufis to minimize the difference between the two doctrines and reduce it to a matter of terminology only.

In the *wujūdī* system God does not have, Sirhindī says, a real will or power. Ibn 'Arabī affirms them in words, but in reality, he denies them. In fact he imposes things on God. Sirhindī says:

> The doctrine of the *wujūdīs* imposes *(ījāb)* things on God, even though they avoid the term *ījāb* and assert a will for Him. In fact they are the negaters of the (Divine) will; in

this regard they differ from the people of all denominations. They state their view in this way: "God has power in the sense that if He wills he does, and if He does not will He does not do". But they believe that the conditional clause in the first proposition is necessary while in the second it is impossible. This implies imposing (things) on God, and negating His power. It is denying power to God as religious people generally understand it. Power means the ability to do and not to do. But the doctrine of these people implies the necessity *(wujūb)* of doing and the impossibility of not doing. How different are the two views! These people hold the same view as is held by the philosophers. Their assertion of a will in order to distinguish themselves from the philosophers will not do them any good, because in the first proposition they regard it necessary and in the second impossible. Will means choosing between two equally possible alternatives. If the alternatives are not equally possible there can be no choice. And there are no equal alternatives in this case as one is necessary and the other is impossible[17].

Sirhindī thinks that the way the *wujūdīs* expound their doctrine of predestination *(qaḍā wa qadar)* implies likewise the imposition of things on God[18].

Ibn 'Arabī's concept of evil is another point of criticism. Sirhindī writes:

> The great Shaykh Ibn 'Arabī does not appreciate privation, depravity and corruption of the phenomenal world, and thinks that contingent essences (which is Sirhindī's term for *a'yān thābitah*) are ideas in God's knowledge and that they are reflected in the mirror of His Self beside which nothing exists out there, and appear to have external existence. He does not realize that the ideal forms are different from the forms of the Divine modes and qualities. He, therefore, believes that Being is one, that the existence of the possible is identical with the existence of the Necessary, that evil and want are relative and that there is

> nothing like pure evil or pure corruption. This is why he thinks that nothing is evil in itself not even infidelity and misdeed; they are evil only in comparison to faith and righteousness. Considered in themselves they are good and right, their relation to their 'lords' *(arbāb)* sanctifies them[19].

Sirhindī also criticises Ibn 'Arabī's view on *fanā'*, *kashf* and religious priorities, some of them we will discuss later. But the main target of his criticism is Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of identity *('aynīyat)* of God and the world. Sirhindī is fully aware of the fact that Ibn 'Arabī does not believe in the absolute identity between the world and God, he identifies as well as differentiates. But his assessment is that the aspect of difference is insignificant and trivial, whereas the aspect of identity is fundamental and decisive. A major consequence, therefore, of Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine is that the attributes of finite beings are in reality the attributes of the Infinite Being, and the acts of finite objects and persons are the acts of God. That this follows from Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine has been discussed before. A commentator of the *Fuṣūṣ* and an expounder of *waḥdat al-wujūd* in his own right, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, endorses this consequence as follows:

> Every power and every act which appears to proceed from manifest forms *(mazāhir)* and seems to belong to them proceeds in reality from God *(al-Ḥaqq)* manifesting in those forms and not from the forms themselves. The Shaykh (may God be pleased with him) says in *al-Ḥikmah al-'Āliyah*: "The individual entity does not act, it is its Lord who acts in it; it is sufficient for the entity that the act is ascribed to it. Thus power or action is attributed to the created being because of the manifestation of God in it, and not because the action is effected by it. Read the text: 'God has created you and what you do', and realize that your existence, power and action, all are from God who has no equal"[20].

In Sirhindī's opinion the doctrine of One Agent *(tawḥīd fi'lī)* is as wrong as the doctrine of One Being *(tawḥīd wujūdī)*. "To affirm the unity of action *(waḥdat fi'lī)*", he says, "is an act of intoxication. The truth clear and unambiguous in this matter is that the actors are many, and the Creator of acts is one"[21].

When actions are to be done by God, human will is negated and men and women cease to be real persons. "They will be no longer", Sirhindī says, "moral beings and no longer the subject of religious obligation *(taklīf)*. The judgement of God in the hereafter will also become meaningless"[22].

This is one consequence of the doctrine of identity. The other consequence which is the opposite of the first is that God becomes the subject of all good and bad predicates. Sirhindī writes:

> They (the *wujūdīs*) believe that God is the subject of all predicates, necessary and possible. They speak of levels of descent, but at every level it is the same Self who, according to them, is the subject of all the predicates belonging to that level. It is the same Self *(Dhāt)* who enjoys pleasure and suffers pain though in the guise of its visible and imaginary shadows[23].

The *wujūdī* doctrine of identity also effects some religious truths, values and practices. In a letter Sirhindī elaborates the point in this way:

> Some people who claim to combine God's transcendence with His immanence say that faith in transcendence is available to every believer. But the gnostic believes in immanence and views creation as the manifestation of the Creator, regards multiplicity as a robe of Unity and perceives the Maker in the made. For them belief in pure transcendence is a defect and the vision of Unity beyond multiplicity is an evil. These people regard those who concentrate on pure Unity as imperfect and think that by perceiving Unity without perceiving multiplicity one limits and conditions Unity.

The call of the prophets is to pure transcendence, and the message of heavenly books is to believe in otherness. Prophets deny all false gods, human and non-human, call for their rejection, and guide people to the unity of the Necessary Being who is unique and indefinable *(be chūn wa chagūn)*. Has anybody heard a prophet calling for belief in immanence and saying that the creation is the manifestation of the Creator! All the prophets (peace be on them) agree on affirming the unity of the Necessary Being, and reject all other lords besides Him. ... But these people set up numerous lords *(arbāb)* and believe that they are the manifestations of the Lord of lords. ... These people do not know the way of the prophets. The message of the prophets is based on the premise of duality, upon the existence of an other *(ghayr)* and its difference *(ghayrīyat)* from God. To infer oneness or identity of being from their statements is completely unwarranted. If there is really One Being and all others are his manifest forms, and the worship of other beings is the worship of the One, as these people say, why is it that the prophets so vehemently condemn the worship of others and threaten with eternal punishment the worshippers of other beings, and denounce them as the enemies of God!

Some of them say that the prophets do not reveal the secret of the Unity of Being as the common man has limited intelligence; on the contrary they base their preaching on the assumption of an other and its otherness; they conceal the Unity and talk of multiplicity. This explanation is unacceptable, just like the *Shī'ah* doctrine of *taqīyah:* Prophets must preach the truth. If the truth is that there is only One Being and nothing else exists, why should the prophets hide it and say what is not the truth? In matters concerning particularly the essence, attributes and acts of the Necessary Being, they are obligated more than any one else to declare the truth....

These people dub as polytheists *(mushrik)* those who believe in the duality of being and shun the worship of things other than God. On the other hand, they consider unitarian *(muwaḥḥid)* people who believe in the oneness of Being even if they may be worshipping a thousand idols, provided they regard them as the manifestation of the Divine and their worship as the worship of God. Let one decide which of these groups is really polytheist and which is really unitarian.

Prophets have never preached Unity of Being *(waḥdat al-wujūd)*, and have never said that the believers in the duality of being are polytheists. They have preached the oneness of Godhead *(waḥdat al-ma'būd)* and condemned the worship of other beings as polytheism. Since *wujūdīs* do not consider the world as something other than God, they do not reject the worship of the other. But the other is other whether they recognize it or not[24].

The doctrine of identity may also lead to an inversion of religious priorities, Sirhindī says:

Some of these people hold that prayer *(ṣalāh)* does not avail *(dūr az kār)* since it is based, in their view, on the assumption of the other *(ghayr)* and its difference. They extol fasting *(ṣawm)* over prayer *(ṣalāh)*. The author of *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah* says that in fasting (i.e. abstinence from eating and drinking) one participates in the holiness *(ṣamadīyah)* of God, whereas in *ṣalāh* one descends to the other and its otherness, and distinguishes between the worshipper and the worshipped. This statement is based, as you know, on the doctrine of *tawḥīd wujūdī*, which is the condition of intoxicated people[25].

Sirhindī's Point of Departure

In the light of the foregoing criticism it is natural that Sirhindī should reject the *wujūdī* doctrine of identity. He cannot subscribe to the idea that Being is One whether you call

it God or the world and proceed to distinguish between them in terms of the Absolute and the conditioned, as the *wujūdīs* do. He would rather maintain that God is absolutely different from the world. The difference between the being of God and the being of the world is not a difference of two forms of one and the same Being as the *wujūdīs* think, nor is it a difference of degree, as the philosophers of Illumination believe. The *wujūdīs* and the Illuminationists both hold that Being is One, but whereas the *wujūdīs* deny any distinction of degree in Being and regard it absolutely uniform, the Illuminationists admit the distinction of perfect Being (God) and imperfect beings (the objects of the world). Sirhindī rejects the doctrine of identity in either forms. For him there is absolutely no comparison *(lā nisbah)* between the Being of God and the being of the world. God is a different category of Being altogether.

One way to uphold absolute difference between the Being of God and the being of the world is to take Being as such *(lā bi-sharṭ shay)* as an abstract concept *(amr intizā'ī)* without a corresponding reality, and affirm the reality of particular beings only. On this view God would be being like other beings. Of course, he will be absolutely different from other beings, nevertheless He will be a particular being. This is the traditional theological position from which Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1327) and Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 793/1390) advance their criticism of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. Theologians do not think that by taking God as a being along with other beings they put the world at par with God, nor do they think that by asserting that the world exists along with God they run the risk of associating something with God in his essence or in his essential attributes.

Sirhindī does not take this course. He makes a distinction between two senses of *wujūd*: There is a sense in which all the objects of the world are beings, but God is not a being in that sense: He is therefore not a being along with other beings. The other sense of being is that in which there is only one being,

and that is God. Sirhindī says that this is being in the real *(aṣlī)* sense. In its real sense therefore Being is identical and coterminous with God; He alone exists and the objects of the world do not exist. The being that the world has is not a real being, it is only a shadow being *(wujūd ẓillī)*.

In affirming the existence of One Being and denying the existence of other beings, Sirhindī is one with Ibn 'Arabī. Like him, he charges the theologians of committing *Shirk fi'l-wujūd*,[26] that is, of associating things of the world with God in respect to existence. But the agreement between Sirhindī and Ibn 'Arabī is only superficial. For what one means by saying that Being is One and nothing exists besides God is completely different from what the other means by the same proposition. For Ibn 'Arabī "Being is One" means that there is One Being which considered from one angle is God and considered from another angle is the world, and therefore nothing exists besides God. For Sirhindī "Being is One" means that Being truly and really *(wujūd aṣlī)* is one which is God, and the world which exists there separately from God has no real being, it exists only with a shadow being *(wujūd ẓillī)*. The proposition that nothing exists besides God means that as real being God alone exists and the world does not exist in that sense.

How does Sirhindī understand *wujūd aṣlī* and *wujūd ẓillī*? We shall discuss that question shortly. But it must be pointed out here that whatever else the term *wujūd ẓillī* may mean it certainly does not mean any of the following three things: First, it is not a lower from of being different from the *wujūd aṣlī* in degree only. Second, it is not an emanation from the *wujūd aṣlī* and in a sense different from it. Sirhindī rejects the view which holds that "the existence of contingent beings is neither different from the existence of the Necessary Being nor identical with it"[27]. In short there is an absolutely unbridgeable difference between the existence of God and the existence of the world. In other words, there is a duality *(thanawīyat)* of existence. But on a deeper level there is no duality, and Being in the real sense is One and only One.

The Concept of Shadow Being

Sirhindī's concept of shadow being *(wujūd ẓillī)* is the most original and at the same time the most elusive concept of his philosophy. He explained the concept again and again to his sons and disciples some of whom were men of extraordinarily sharp intellect but even they had difficulty in understanding the concept and repeatedly sought for clarification.

In order to understand what Sirhindī means by shadow being, and how he distinguishes it from the Real Being let us attend to the illustration of an object and its image in a mirror which Sirhindī often uses to explain the point. The image in the mirror is also there outside our minds, open to public perception, and some of the consequences which follow from the object also follow from the image. For instance, if someone says that he has seen Zayd while he has seen only the image of Zayd in a mirror and not Zayd himself, he is not wrong[28]. The image has an objective existence *(wujūd khārijī)*; it is not an idea that subsists in a mind but a reality that exists out there.

But although the image has an objective existence it does not exists like its object. First, it is not as effective and as consequential as the object. Second, and more important, it does not exist in the kind of space that its object exists in. To be sure the image appears a meter behind the mirror as the object is a meter in front of the mirror. But in fact it is not behind the mirror. If you look behind the mirror you would not get it there. Now, if the image is not behind the mirror, is it in the mirror? Certainly not. For the mirror is hardly 3 mm thick and the image which appears to be a meter behind the mirror cannot be in the mirror. The image is, therefore, neither behind the mirror nor in the mirror. Certainly, it is not in front of the mirror. Hence the image is not in the kind of space which its object occupies. On the other hand, it is also true that it is in some kind of space, for it is not a mere idea, and it is given in sense perception as its object. It is further true that the space which the image in the mirror occupies is not the type of the space which a spirit or a symbolic being in Ibn 'Arabī's sense

of the term occupies, because it is neither a spirit nor a symbolic being. Sirhindī's way out of this impasse is to say that the image exists not in a real space but in a shadow space *(khārij ẓillī)*. What he means by this is that although the space of the image appears to be like the space of a physical object, when we look into it closely we find that it is not the ordinary physical space. It only resembles it in some respects; it is a shadow of the physical space.

Now, if the image does not behave as the object, and if it does not exist in the space in which the object exists, it follows that the image cannot have the same kind of being that the object has. It must have a shadow being *(wujūd ẓillī)*. Though it appears to have a real being like its object, in reality it does not have that being, it has only a semblance of it. The difference between the real being of the object and the shadow being of the image, Sirhindī clarifies, is not a difference of degree but of kind. In spite of its resemblance with the object in some respects, the image is a completely different kind of being, just as its space is a completely different space although there is a superficial resemblance between them. Compared to the being of the object the being of the image is nothing more than an imaginary being *(wujūd wahmī)*. Although Sirhindī calls the image an imaginary being he is far from regarding it as a fictitious or an illusory being. The image is there outside our minds, it is something, a fact *(nafs amrī)* of common veridical experience, and not an illusion. It is true that the image is not a real being existing in any realm of existence, the physical, the spiritual, and the symbolic; but it is also true that the image is a fact and not a creation of fancy. It is, in other words, both real and unreal; it exists and does not exist. It is a category of being by itself.

When Sirhindī says that the *wujūd* of the world is a shadow of the *wujūd* of God, or that the world has a shadow being, he means all that is implied in the conception of the being of the image which we have discussed. He means, first, that God and the world are two separate beings, each existing

in its own way, and not one being as the *wujūdīs* think. The shadow *(zill)* of a being is a separate being numerically different from its original object *(aṣl)*[29]. This is fundamental to Sirhindī's concept of shadow *(zill)*. Secondly, the world is different from God in an ontological sense also. It is not only a separate being numerically different from God; it is also a different kind of being. God is the real being, rather He is the only Real Being and the world as compared to God is only an imaginary *(khayālī)* being. There is no comparison between the being of God and the being of the world, God transcends the world absolutely. Sirhindī rejects all theories of the world that imply immanence of God in any sense. The world is neither an emanation of the Divine Being as the philosophers believe, nor His manifestation or determination as the *wujūdīs* postulate. "In my view", Sirhindī says, "there is no determination. There can be no determination determining the Indeterminate. These concepts fit in the doctrine of Shaykh Muḥīy 'l-Dīn and his followers (God may bless them). If these words have occurred in my writings they should not be taken literally"[30]. Yet, and this is the third point, the world is not an illusion. Sirhindī very much means that the world exists out there, independently of our minds, in a space which is its own, just as the image exists there as a matter of fact open to public experience in a space that belongs to it and not to its object. Fourthly, the world is absolutely dependent on God, dependent for its existence and dependent for its continuation, just as the image depends on its object. Sirhindī rejects the mutual dependence of God and the world which the *wujūdī* philosophy implies and affirms only the unilateral dependence of the world on God.

These are the four essential ideas in Sirhindī's view that the world is a shadow being, devoid of real being, possessing only an imaginary existence. These points have been made by him separately in various places in his letters. The following passage from a latter included in the third volume of his *Letters* brings out these points somewhat more clearly than others:

By the realm of the imaginary *(wahm)* we mean the state when there is appearance without something existing there. When the figure of Zayd appears in a mirror there is just an appearance and nothing exists there. For the figure of Zayd does not exist in the mirror; it has only an illusory appearance but no existence. It has been revealed to us in an authentic *kashf* and a clear vision that by His perfect power God has created the world in the domain of fancy *(wahm)*, and by His consummate skill conferred existence on sheer appearance. The domain of fancy has appearance without existence, but since the world has been created by God in that domain it has come to acquire along with appearance an existence also. Therefore, in virtue of being an act of God, the world exists there. And since the world is an appearance qualified with existence, it is something real *(nafs amrī)*, it can have some real predicates and produce results. The domain of fancy is different both from the domain of ideas *(martabah 'ilmī)* and the domain of external existence *(martabah khārijī)*. But in comparison to the domain of ideas, it is closer to the domain of existence; its existence resembles more the existence of the external realm rather than the subsistence of the ideas, which are said to have a mental existence. On its other side there is the realm of objective being. The manifestation (of Being) in fancy *(wahm)* has a perfect resemblance with the objective manifestation as compared to the ideal manifestation which is the realm of the hidden and non-manifest being. God introduces, so to say, a shadow objectivity in the realm of fancy *(wahm)* and brings out the ideas in that realm, and thus produces the outer world with a shadow of objective existence in the domain of shadow objectivity.

Therefore, in the realm out-there *(khārij)* there is nothing except the One Absolute Transcendental Being, and in the "shadow out-there" the world in its multiplicity exists with a shadow being produced by the creative will of God. In the real out-there unity is real, and in the shadow out-there

plurality is real as it is real in the domain of idea. Hence both unity and plurality are real, each in its own domain, and there is no contradiction. Just as the objectivity and the existence of the world are shadowy, similarly all its qualities like life, knowledge, power, etc. are also shadows of God's qualities. Even the reality *(nafs amrī)* which is attributed to the existence of the world is a shadow of the reality *(naf amrī)* of the Existing Being[31].

Being and Non-Being

To say that the world and God are two separate beings, that the world is a shadow being and God is the only real being, or that God does not permeate the world but transcends it is a description of a mystic experience and not a philosophical explanation of that experience. Similarly to illustrate that truth through the example of an object and its image is an effort to elucidate the various points involved in the experience. There is nothing very new in these points. Theologians have always maintained the absolute transcendence of God, sufis have even used terms like *aṣl* (real) and *ẓill* (shadow). What is new in Sirhindī is that he works these points into a philosophy. The *ẓill* (shadow), for instance, is not an illustrative word in Sirhindī but represents a completely new category of being which is both real and unreal. It is a new realm of being in addition to the realms that the *wujūdīs* have described. In the previous section we have seen the initial justification of this concept. We shall now see how Sirhindī develops it into a full-fledged philosophical concept.

Studies of sufi thought do not show much awareness of the distinction between mystic experience and its philosophical construction. There is even less realization that a philosophically trained mystic can take a lot of time in interpreting his experience in a philosophical language, an experience that he has attained in almost no time. Sirhindī came to Shaykh Bāqī bi-Allāh in 1008/1599 as a mystic who was intellectually convinced of the truth of *waḥdat al-wujūd.*

That intellectual conviction was later on confirmed by his *wujūdī* experiences. Then he moved out of that stage and began to see things as shadows. This happened within the next one or two years, because within the four years that Sirhindī passed with his Shaykh before the latter's death in 1012/1603 Sirhindī not only crossed the stage of *waḥdat al-wujūd* but also passed the stage of *ẓillīyat* (shadow-hood of the world) and entered the stage of complete transcendence where he saw God, as he says, beyond transcendence *(warā al-warā')*. Sirhindī experienced the shadow character of the world in a couple of years, but he took next ten to fifteen years[32] for working out a philosophy on the basis of that experience. Some philosophical implications of the experience he could only perceive even later.

Sirhindī's first training was in the theology that was developed by the theologians of Central Asia. His second training was in the *wujūdī* philosophy of Ibn 'Arabī. Both the systems, however, were in conflict with his new mystical experience: theology did not recognize the shadow character of the world, and the wujūdī philosophy did not accept the absolute transcendence of God. But Sirhindī had no other philosophy and no other terminology. This naturally put great strains on his thought. He makes a statement at one time then revises it later, defines a term on *wujūdī* or theological lines or uses a word that does not fit in his system, later realizes the contradiction and finally gives it up. This and other problems are quite natural to come up when one tries to express ideas in a language that was not created for the purpose. One has therefore to be very careful in expounding his ideas.

The fundamental ideas of Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of identity are summed up by Sirhindī as follows: "Since according to these people nothing is in Divine knowledge or out there except the Necessary Being and His names and attributes which are one with His essence, and since the ideal forms are one with the Bearer of forms and not His semblances *(shibh)* or images *(mithāl)*, and since the forms of subsisting entities reflected in the Manifest Existence are in their view indential

with those entities and not their appearances *(shibh)*, they have been led to assert identity and pronounce that all is He"[33]. The doctrine of identity, in other words, is a consequence of the following four propositions: one, there is only one Being in subsistence and in existence; second, the attributes and names of the Necessary Being are not different from its Essence but one with it; third, the ideal entities *(a'yān thābitah)* are one with the Necessary Essence and not its images; and fourth, the forms of the ideal essences which are reflected in the Manifest Being are one with the ideal essences and not their appearances *(shibh)*.

Sirhindī opposes these identity propositions with his transcendental propositions that can be put like this: first, the real being is One and that is God, and the world has a shadow being. Second, the attributes and the names of God are different from His Essence although inseparable from it. Third, the ideal essences of things are shadows *(aẓlāl)* of the Divine Essence and different from It. And fourth, the objects existing in the world are shadows of their *a'yān* (ideal essences) engraved on a shadow existence *(wujūd ẓillī)* in a shadow space *(khārij ẓillī)*.

Sirhindī's whole philosophy moves around these propositions. He begins to explain it by making a distinction between a substantive predication of existence *(wujūd)* and adjectival *(ishtiqāq-an)* predication of it, between "X is existence" and "X is an existent". Existence as a substantive is God's; he is Existence. Sirhindī says that the proper way of speaking about God is to say that He is Existence and not that He is existent[34]. One can say that God exists if one means by it that He is Existence. This means that Sirhindī identifies existence with Divine Essence. He thus takes a position which differs from the position of the theologians who treat existence as a quality, and sides with Ibn 'Arabī. Existence as a predicate belongs to the objects of the world. They are to be described as existing or existents but not existence. One has to distinguish in their case between an essence and its existence and attribute

existence to the essence. Theologians and philosophers make this distinction but the *wujūdīs* fail to do so. This leads the *wujūdīs* to hold that existence is one. Theologians, on the other hand, fail to see that in the Divine context existence should be predicated substantively. Consequently they take God as a being among other beings. The failure to make the distinction between the substantive and the adjectival predication of existence *(wujūd)* leads, in short, the *wujūdīs* to monism and the theologians to pluralism.

The *wujūd* which we predicate of God substantively is the real *wujūd*, and the *wujūd* which we predicate of things adjectively is the shadow *wujūd*. The cause of that difference is non-being *('adam)*. The Divine *wujūd* is real because it is free from non-being. The objects of the world are shadows because they are in their essences non-being. The whole structure of the world, Sirhindī says, is raised on the foundation of non-being.

Sirhindī distinguishes between two senses of non-being (*'adam*)[35], substantive and adjectival as he does in the case of existence. *'Adam* as substantive is pure non-being,absolute imperfection , sheer evil and impossible. On the opposite, Being as substantive is pure Existence, absolute perfection, complete goodness and self-necessary. *'Adam* as adjective is a shadow existence. Pure non-being is impossible and inconceivable, but particular forms of non-being are conceivable and possible.

Sirhindī opposes non-being to being, pure non-being to pure Being, and particular forms of non-being to the particular forms of Being. All that exists there which is not self-necessary has an element of non-being. The Divine Essence is self-necessary, hence it is pure Being. The attributes of God which are distinct from the Essence of God depend upon it, and for that reason have an element of non-being. "Whatever has an iota of possibility *(rā'iḥah-i imkān)* has an element of non-being"[36]. From God's attributes down to the lowest being in the world everything has non-being in different measures.

This view of non-being is essentially Platonic, and completely different from the view of Ibn 'Arabī. For Ibn 'Arabī *'adam* (non-being) is the absence of being, does not oppose or obstruct being. When he says that non-being is evil he does not mean anything more than that it is an absence of goodness. To Sirhindī, on the other hand, non-being is a positive evil. As we shall see later, he has a realistic concept of evil in contrast to the purely subjective view that Ibn 'Arabī has. We have seen in the previous lines that in fact Ibn 'Arabī has no concept of non-being. Sirindī, on the contrary, conceives non-being as a parallel principle opposed to being. Does this not mean, one might ask, a dualism of Being and non-being, goodness and evil? Does the opposition of pure Non-being not put limitations on Being and affect it as particular forms of Non-being affect particular non-beings? To this question Sirhindī's answer is that Pure Non-being is absolutely nothing, utterly inconceivable and impossible. There is therefore no question of its opposing Pure Being and affecting it. It is a mere idea, one thinks of it as one thinks of other impossibles. It opposes the idea of Pure Being not the Pure Being itself, which stands above all opposition[37]. Particular non-beings, on the contrary, are not impossible and not mere ideas as pure Non-being. Hence they oppose and affect particular beings. In fact, non-being is a principle of individuation in Sirhindī as it is in Platonism. We have seen that Ibn 'Arabī, consistent with his negative attitude towards non-being, does not confer on it the function of individuation.

God

The Essence *(dhāt)* of God and his existence *(wujūd)* are one and the same thing. This is the position with which Sirhindī begins. Later on for reasons that we will discuss afterwards, he distinguishes between God's Essence and existence. But whether existence is same or distinct, it makes no difference to Sirhindī's view that Divine Existence is the only real existence and that the world is only a shadow. From

this basic premise Sirhindī draws the conclusion that God cannot be said to be in the world or out of it, one with it or different from it. The relation of immanence and transcendence, unity and difference assume that there are two existents. But since there is just One Existent these relations do not arise at all. Sirhindī says:

> The Existent can have no relation with the imaginary *(mawhūm)*. The Existent can be said to be neither in the imaginary nor different from it. Where there is Existent there is no trace of the imaginary, so there is no relation between them. I would explain this point by an illustration. A fire point in rapid motion gives the impression of a burning circle. Though we perceive the circle, there is in fact no circle there; there is just a point. In the sense the point exists the circle does not exist, and from that point of view the point is neither in the circle nor outside it, neither one with the circle nor different from it. The circle does not exist in the sense the point exist, and there can be no relation between the two[38].

The Qur'ān mentions that God encompasses the world, that He is very close to it. Sirhindī interprets such references in two ways. Sometimes he interprets them on the line of the theologians in terms of knowledge[39]. God encompasses the world or is close to it means that He knows each and every part of the world very closely. But sometimes he says that the nature of these terms are unknowable to us. We believe in them on the authority of God[40]. The world is dependent on God and is related to Him as a shadow depends on its object, but the exact nature of this dependence is unknowable[41].

From the absolute transcendence of God Sirhindī also infers the impossibility of His determination in the world. The world is an imaginary being and as such it cannot be a determinate manifestation of the Real Being. "To this sufi", he says, "there is no determination. What determination can there be which determines the Indeterminate? These terms fit in the doctrine of Shaykh Muḥīy'l-Dīn and his followers. If they

occur in our statements they should be taken to have a linguistic resemblance only"[42].

Since God stands above all relations, He is therefore unknowable. This is true not only for the Divine Essence but also Existence,[43] God transcends the world completely. Ibn 'Arabī also holds that God is unknowable. But his reasons are different. The Divine Essence is unknowable because it transcends all relations: this is the same reason which Sirhindī offers. But the existence of God is unknowable for Ibn 'Arabī not because it transcends the existence of the world, but because being finite manifestations of God we cannot comprehend the totality of his manifestations that knowing God implies.

Attributes of God

God is an essence with attributes. He is ever qualified with attributes *(ṣifāt)* and modes *(shu'ūn)*. Sirhindī cannot conceive of an attributeless Essence. "The Essence", he writes, "isolated from attributes and names is only a subjective idea *(mujarrad i'tibār)*"[44]. There is no difference in this respect between Sirhindī and Ibn 'Arabī. We have seen that Ibn 'Arabī also does not take the distinction more than a mental distinction. Sirhindī is quite aware of this fact; one indication of it is that he feels free to use terms like *aḥadīyah* and *wāḥidīyah* in his own system, and the second indication is that in his criticism of Ibn 'Arabī he never accuses him of affirming an attribute-less Essnece. This is extremely important.

The point at which Sirhindī differs from Ibn 'Arabī is the conception of attributes. Ibn 'Arabī understands them as relations between His Essence and its co-eternal essential modes that are the ideal prototypes *(a'yān thābitah)* of things or its concrete determinations in the world. Since relations have no footing in existence, he denies that the attributes have an existence over and above the Essence. But this is exactly what Sirhindī affirms. He says that the attributes of God have an

existence in addition to *(zā'id)* His Essence. Hence the difference between Ibn 'Arabī and Sirhindī is not on the point whether or not the Divine Essence can be isolated from its attributes, for they are agreed that Divine Essence and its attributes are inseparable. They differ only with regard to the nature of attributes.

About the essential attributes of God Sirhindī writes: "The seven or eight attributes of God which are His essential qualities have an objective existence *(wujūd khārijī)*. No one other than the People of Truth *(Ahl Ḥaqq)* have affirmed the existence of these qualities. Even later sufis have denied their existence and regarded their additional character a matter of thought only. They have said: "The attributes are different from the Divine Essence in thought but one with it in reality". The People of Truth are right because their view is derived from the niche of Prophecy and is supported by *kashf* and insight *(firāsat)*"[45]. These attributes are: life, knowledge, will, power, vision, audition, speech and creation *(takwīn)*. The last one is controversial among the theologians, but Sirhindī firmly believes[46] that it is one of the essential attributes of God.

This is obviously the standard theological doctrine. Sirhindī adopts it not so much because it is the view of the theologians whom he calls the People of Truth as for the reason that it contributes to his transcendental view of God. For it means that God does not have to depend on the world for His essential attributes as He has to in case one regards them as relation like Ibn 'Arabī. According to Ibn 'Arabī God is bound in a set of mutual relations with the world, He bestows upon the world its existence, and the world bestows upon Him His attributes. In Sirhindī's view the essential attributes are part of God's essence, hence His essence is self-sufficient.

The objection which is commonly made against the theological view of attributes is formulated by Sirhindī in these words: "If the attributes are also there they will be either contingent or necessary. Contingency implies existence in time, for every contingent being in their view is temporal. On

the other hand, the multiplicity of the necessary beings is a contradiction of God's unity. Again, on the assumption that the attributes are contingent the Essence of God is divested of attributes, implying ignorance and impotency on His part". He sometimes meets these objections by saying that though the Essence of God is intellectually distinct and objectively *(dar khārij)* different from His attributes it is inseparable and unisolable from them in reality. The Essence and attributes are not separate beings existing in themselves, hence the question of the plurality of eternals does not arise. Sometimes he gives a different answer: "The solution of this difficulty which has been revealed to me is this: God exists by His essence and not by an existence, be it one with the Essence or different from it. The qualities of God, too, exist by His essence, and not by His existence. In fact existence has no access to that lavel. Shaykh 'Alā' al-Dawlah referred to this point when he said: 'The realm of the Lord is above the realm of existence. Consequently the question of possibility or necessity does not arise at that level. Possibility and necessity are relations that hold between essence *(māhīyah)* and existence *(wujūd)*; when there is no existence there is no question of possibility or necessity. This is a truth which is beyond the reach of reason, and the captives of reason shall never get at it, and cannot help denying it, except those whom God saves"[47].

The attributes of God are simple *(basīṭ)* and the multiplicity of their objects, Sirhindī holds, poses no problem for their simplicity. He wites:

> Like His Essence the attributes of God are unique and absolutely simple. There is, for instance, one indivisible knowledge in which all that is known from the beginning to the end is revealed. There is one perfect indivisible power by which everything, past or present, comes into being, and there is one indivisible speech by which God speaks from eternity to eternity, and so on. The plurality of objects are known and created by God, but His attributes of knowledge and power are not affected by them. This

truth is beyond the reach of reason; it would hardly be accepted by the people of reason and logic. They would rather consider it impossible that things are known to God and yet His knowledge is not connected with them, or that objects are created by Him and yet His power is not connected with them. They do not know that in the perspective of Divinity past and future are one present instant *('ān)*. Even the instant does not exist at that level, we use it because no better term is available to us. Every thing past or future is knowable in that instant. God knows Zayd in one and the same instant as existing and as not existing, as a fetus and as a child, as young and as old, as alive and as dead, as existing in between death and resurrection, and as existing at the time of resurrection and judgement. The instant can obviously have no connection with these different things. If it has it will cease to be an instant and will rather be the time which is divisible into past and future. We conclude, therefore, that these different beings exist and do not exist in the same instant[48].

In the perspective of Reality there is no time, there is one simple duration, consequently, the multiplicity of objects presents no difficulty for the simplicity of Divine attributes and do not affect God's unity.

Thought distinguishes between Essence and attributes, regards them as separate beings, opposes one to the other, and considers the attributes as veils upon the Essence. But in reality they are not different beings, and there is no opposition between them. They form a unity which is unique. Sirhindī says that the separation of the Essence and the attributes occurs in two ways: in one it occurs as a result of an intellectual analysis of the idea of God, and in the other it happens in mystical meditation. "When a perfect mystic is deep in meditation over the Essence of God, the attributes and names [of God] go out of his vision and nothing remains in his perception except the Essence. This isolation of the Essence,

however, is only a matter of the subjective perception of the mystic and not an objective fact"[49].

Even though God has real attributes his Essence is self-sufficient. "God exists by his Essence which is sufficient for his existence as well as for the existence of the attributes which existence implies such as life, knowledge, power, hearing, seeing, will, speech and creation. To have these perfections God does not need qualities in addition to his Essence, although as a matter of fact He has them"[50]. A natural objection to this position is: If the Essence of God is sufficient for the existence of all his attributes why should you posit additional attributes and expose yourself to the charge of plurality of eternal beings. The philosophers and the Mu'tazilah affirm nothing besides the Essence and deny attributes. They are therefore not exposed to that charge.

Sirhindī poses this question and answers: "The Essence of God is most sublime and entirely transcendent. It is completely self-sufficient and absolutely incomparable with other objects. His wisdom requires that for creation there must be a rapport between the Creator and the object of creation. This is why the qualities have to come one step down, assume a second-degree status *(zillīyat)*, and establish a kind of rapport with the objects of the world. Were there no mediation of attributes nothing would have been created"[51].

But it may be pointed out: "Though the philosophers and the Mu'tazilah have not affirmed objective attributes they do posit ideal considerations and believe in the differentiation of essential qualities in God's knowledge. They do not, therefore, attribute creation directly to the pure Essence". To this rejoinder Sirhindī's reply is: "Ideal considerations can only account for ideal beings and can satisfy those sufis for whom the world exists only in imagination. But for a world that exists out there [as Sirhindī believes] ideal considerations cannot do. There have to be real attributes there"[52].

Creation

Sirhindī explains creation in terms of the ideal essences of things and their emergence into the phenomenal existence, as Ibn 'Arabī does. But in conceiving both, the essence and the existence of things, he differs from Ibn 'Arabī fundamentally.

According to Ibn 'Arabī the essences of things are the determinations of God's Essence and one with it. They are real beings subsisting eternally in God's knowledge as His essential modes. When he calls them *'adam* (non-being) he only means, as we have noted earlier, that they do not exist in the outer world. He never means that they are essentially non-being. But Sirhindī regards the essences of things which he calls the realties of the contingents *(ḥaqā'iq-i mumkināt)* as determinations of non-being rather than of Being, with an element of being which is a reflection *(ẓill)* of Being in the mirror of the particular non-beings. For instance, the essence of man consists of particular determinations of non-being like death, ignorance, impotency, wickedness, ugliness, etc. with the reflections *('ukūs)* of the attributes of the Real Being like life, knowledge, power, goodness, beauty, etc. in the mirror of these opposite non-beings. Hence the essence or reality of man is essentially non-being with an element of Being which is only a reflection *(ẓill)* of the Real Being numerically different from and ontologically of a lower order than the Real Being. Contingent essences *(ḥaqqā'iq-i mumkināt)* are not the essential modes of God and identical with His Essence as Ibn 'Arabī thinks. They are the determinations of non-being which subsist in God's knowledge as mere ideas of things and not the essential modes of God. They are essentially non-beings *('adamāt)* and not beings as Ibn 'Arabī thinks. Sirhindī sums up the difference between his view of the essences *(a'yān)* and that of Ibn 'Arabī as follows:

> To me these non-beings along with the reflections of the names and attributes [of God] are the realities of contingent beings, the non-beings functioning as the ground or matter and the reflections functioning as the

forms imposed on the matter. To Shaykh Muḥīy'l-Dīn the essences of the contingent beings are Divine names and attributes themselves differentiated in Divine knowledge. But to me contingent essences are non-beings which are opposed to Divine names and attributes along with the reflections of the names and attributes that are formed in the mirrors of non-being in Divine knowledge and combined with them[53].

A wujūdī sufi raised some objections to this view of the contingent essences. One objection was that the essences of things could not be non-beings, they had to be something positive. Sirhindī replied that the essences were not pure non-beings, in fact they had an ideal being *(wujūd 'ilmī)*, a kind of subsistence which was what was required for the contingent essences. Another objection was: if the contingent essences were non-beings the Being of God would be affected by their presence in Him. To this objection Sirhindī replied: "This is a strange objection. God knows all things good and bad, and nothing resides in God, and He is not qualified by them. How can the non-beings (i.e. the essence of things) enter into the being of God". The third objection was: If the realities of the saints and the prophets who are created beings are also non-beings would that not mean the negation of their dignity? "Why should it mean?" Sirhindī retorts. "By His perfect wisdom and power God has made them capable of mirroring His names and attributes, invested them with capacities of prophecy and saintship, endowed them with the reflections *(zilāl)* of his own perfections, and honoured them just as He has created man from a drop of dirty water and elevated him to high positions. It is strange that these people are keen to preserve the dignity of man but are ready to surrender the transcendence of God. They say: 'All is He', and identify all filthy and evil things with God and do not desist from it. But they feel ashamed of attribting non-being to man and recoil from it. May God give them some sense of justice". The fourth objection was that Sirhindī was violating the consensus of the sufis by his innovations. To this charge Sirhindī replied: "In

fact we consider the doctrine, 'All is He', an innovation and believe that the other doctrine 'All is from Him' is the agreed doctrine of the sufis. The reason why the author of the *Fuṣūṣ* has been the object of condemnation till these days is that he has expounded the doctrine that all is He. My doctrine is that all is from Him, and it is approved by the *Shar'* and reason, and substantiated by *kashf* and inspiration *(ilhām)*"[54].

An important question that arises in connection with Sirhindī's concept of contingent essences is formulated by him in these words: "What do you mean by the expression, 'mirror of non-being'? Non-being is an absolute non-entity. How can it serve as a mirror of Being"? His answer is: "Of course non-being is a mere non-entity in the sense that it is not out there. But it has a kind of identity in Divine knowledge. It has acquired an ideal being in the views of those who believe in mental existence. Non-being has been said to be the mirror of Being because whatever evil or want is asserted of it will be negated of the mental being which is opposed to it; similarly every perfection which is denied to Non-being would be affirmed of Being. Non-being is therefore the condition for the manifestation of the perfections of Being. This is the meaning of the expression that non-being is the mirror of Being"[55].

Contingent essences in the mind of God have a very low kind of being. In emerging into manifest existence they undergo a further loss of being. Of course emergence *(ẓuhūr)* in existence does not mean that the essences are transferred from God's mind into the outer world. It only means that God creates in the world out there beings on the pattern of the ideas that He has of them in His mind. Sirhindī refers this process as 'colouring' *(inṣibāgh)*[56] of the essence with a shadow existence. The exact nature of this colouring is unknowable as it is in the view of Ibn 'Arabī. But Sirhindī makes two things quite clear: First, the existence of the objects is different from the existence of God, and, second, that in comparison to the latter which is the real Existence, it is a mere shadow.

Realm of Accidents

In our discussion of the shadow being above we have noted that the being of the world, according to Sirhindī, is a category by itself which we can best characterize as unreal-real or non-existing existent. Sirhindī in his second phase of creationism, when he places God's essence *(dhāt)* above existence *(warā' al-wujūd)*, goes on to deny an essence *(dhāt)* to the objects of the world and reduces them to mere accidents without an essence. The world is a pack of accidents without a substance. In the phenomenal world there is no substance and what the theologians call substance is just another accident. The world is a realm of accidents, one dependent on the other. The whole complex of accidents is dependent on the Real Being who is the only Essence *(dhāt)* and the only substance that sustains them[57].

The Mu'tazilite theologian Naẓẓām was right in saying that the world is a collectivity of accidents, but he failed to attribute the accidents to the One Essence. The Ashā'irah erred in asserting a substratum for these accidents in what they called indivisible substances. Ibn 'Arabī got the point that the essence to which the accidents are attributed is none other than the Divine Essence. But he made two mistakes. He believed like the theologians that the accidents are momentary, perishing the same moment they appear in existence. He did not realize that the arguments advanced by the theologians for the momentariness of accidents are weak and at best inconclusive[58]. As for the seers, the momentary character of the accidents is a subjective experience. The objects appear in their consciousness when their attention is diverted from the Divine Being, and vanish when it is centred on Him. The moments of centring and diversion follow each other continuously and create thereby an impression of the momentariness of the objects, their constant vanishing and renewal[59].

The other and more serious error of Ibn 'Arabī lies in not separating the Essence from the accidents. "The world is a collectivity of accidents in one Essence" means for him that the

Divine Being appears here in one particular collectivity of accidents and there in another collectivity, such that the collectivities have no identities of their own separate from the Divine Essence which is the only existent. For Sirhindī, the collectivities of accidents which we call by different names are separate identities that hang, so to say, by One Essence *(dhāt)* in a manner similar to the subsistence of a multitude of images by their one object[60].

If the objects are mere accidents and have no real essence to which they are referred, it follows that the referent of every 'I' will be the Divine Self. Sirhindī accepts this corollary, but he would not allow the inference that the human egos are identical with the Divine Ego. For the human egos though essentially unreal are not absolute nullities, they have a shadow being and can well act as subjects. The Divine Ego is the sustainer of this shadow human ego, and is in that sense the ultimate referent of every 'I'[61].

If God is the substratum of all accidents would His Essence be not affected by the contingency of the accidents? This objection could have been justified if God were regaraded by Sirhindī as the locus of accidents wherein they inhere. But Sirhindī denies the relation of inherence. To him the accidents are attributed to God as ideas are attributed to a mind and their dependence resembles the subsistence of the ideas. The objects of the world depend upon God as the creations of magic depend on the magician. In this kind of dependence there is no question of a locus or inherence in the locus. The objects of magic depend on the magician without residing in him. In the same way the world depends upon God. He has created the world in the realm of perception and fancy *(hiss wa wahm)*, has perfected and established it, and has associated the reward and punishment in the hereafter with it. Phenomenal beings, therefore, do not subsist by themselves, they subsist by God without inhering in Him[62].

Notes and References

1. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-Uns* (Lucknow, Nawalkishore, 1328/1910), 436
2. The quatrain may be rendered as follows:
   Every form that appears on the plank of existence,
   Is the form of the One who makes that form.
   When an old river produces a new wave.
   It is in fact the river, though they call it wave.
3. Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-Uns*, 437-440
4. Abdul Haq Ansari, *Sufism and Sharī'ah* (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1986), 2nd print, 110-116
5. Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī, *Ithbāt al-Nubuwwah*, Arabic text with Urdu trans. (Karachi: Ghulām Muṣtafā Khan, 1383 A.H), 5-6
6. Ibid., 7-8
7. Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī, *Mabda' wa Ma'ād* (Delhi: Maṭba' Anṣārī, n.d.), 4
8. Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī, *Maktūbāt*, ed., Nūr Muḥammad (Lahore: 1384/1964), Vol. I, Letter 220, p. 442; Muḥammad Farmān, *Ḥayāt Mujaddid* (Lahore: Majlis Taraqqi'-I Adab, 1985), 4.
9. Sirhindī, Maktūbāt, Vol.II: 44, 980-90
10. *Ibid.*, I: 741, Letter 290
11. *Ibid.*, I: 744, Letter 290
12. S. Abu'l-Ḥassan 'Alī Nadwī, *Tārīkh Da'wat wa 'Azīmat* (Lucknow: n.d.), 4: 150-1; Abu'l-A'lā Mawdūdī, *Tajdīd wa Iḥyā'-i Dīn* (Delhi: n.d.), 90; Muḥammad Ḥasan, *Maqāmāt Imām Rabbānī Mujaddid-i Alf-I Thānī* (Lucknow: Shāhī Press, 1333, A.H), 9
13. Sirhindī, *Maktūbāt*, 1: 744, Letter 290
14. *Ibid.*, I: 741, Letter 290; S.A.H. 'Alī Nadwī, *Tārīkh Da'wat wa 'Azīmat*, 4: 150
15. Sirhindī, Maktūbāt, 1: 102-3, Letter 31
16. *Ibid.*, I: 338-9, Letter 160
17. *Ibid.*, I: 697-8, Letter 286
18. *Ibid.*, I: 698, Letter 286

19. *Ibid.*, I: 494, Letter 234
20. Jāmī, *Lawā'iḥ, Lā'iḥah*, 29
21. Sirhindī, Maktūbāt, I: 101; Letter 30
22. *Ibid.*, III: 1281, Letter 32
23. *Ibid.*, I: 336-7, Letter 160
24. *Ibid.*, I: 650-2, Letter 272
25. *Ibid.*, I: 573, Letter 261
26. *Ibid.*, II: 854, Letter 1
27. *Ibid.*, I: 660-1, Letter 272
28. *Ibid.*, III: 1452, Letter 89
29. *Ibid.*, II: 857, Letter 1
30. *Ibid.*, III: 1568, Letter 122
31. *Ibid.*, III: 1516, Letter 109
32. *Ibid.*, II: 871, Letter 5
33. *Ibid.*, II: 855-6, Letter 1
34. *Ibid.*, I: 485, Letter 234
35. *Ibid.*, I: 487, Letter 234
36. *Ibid.*, III: 1412, Letter 76
37. *Ibid.*, II: 487, Letter 234
38. *Ibid.*, II: 1152-3, Letter 98
39. *Ibid.*, I: 103, Letter 30
40. *Ibid.*, II: 1153, Letter 98
41. *Ibid.*, II: 1155, Letter 98
42. *Ibid.*, III: 1568, Letter 122
43. *Ibid.*, I: 485, Letter 234
44. *Ibid.*, II: 884, Letter 11
45. *Ibid.*, II: 860-1, Letter 2
46. *Ibid.*, II: 863, Letter 3
47. *Ibid.*, I: 861, Letter 2
48. *Ibid.*, I: 782-3, Letter 296
49. *Ibid.*, II: 884-5, Letter 11
50. *Ibid.*, III: 1262, Letter 26
51. *Ibid.*, III: 1263-4, Letter 26
52. *Ibid.*, III: 1264-5, Letter 26
53. *Ibid.*, II: 857, Letter 1; I: 488, Letter 234
54. *Ibid.*, II: 919, Letter 27
55. *Ibid.*, I: 496, Letter 234

56. *Ibid.*, I: 488, Letter 1
57. *Ibid.*, II: 992-3, Letter 45
58. *Ibid.*, II: 895-6, Letter 45
59. *Ibid.*, II: 995, Letter 45
60. *Ibid.*, II: 994, Letter 45
61. *Ibid.*, III: 1362, Letter 64
62. *Ibid.*, II: 994, Letter 45

Shāh Walīy Allāh: Attempt to Revise *Waḥdat Al-Wujūd*

The work of Sirhindī produced different reactions among the sufis. Some like Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq (d. 1052/1642), the famous scholar of *hadith* and sufism, greatly appreciated his work; though he objected to some of his ideas, he agreed with his general approach. In his own works he followed almost the same line[1]. He was however, more concerned with sufi *ṭarīqah* than with sufi doctrine. Sirhindī's theosophical position was defended and elaborated by his son, Shaykh Ma'ṣūm[2] (d. 1079/1668) and a later leader of his *ṭarīqah*, Mirzā Maẓhar Jān Jānān[3] (d. 1195/1780). A large section of the sufis, however, continued to believe in *waḥdat al-wujūd*. Some of them even came out with open criticism of Sirhindī's position, but the majority preferred to state *waḥdat al-wujūd* positively and keep away from controversy. To this group belonged men like Khawjā Khurd[4] (d. 1075/1664), the younger son of Khawjā Bāqī billāh and Shaykh Muḥibb Allāh[5] (d. 1058/1648) of Allāhabād.

The third group of sufis consisted of those who were impressed by Ibn 'Arabī as well as Sirhindī. Their number has been quite considerable. The most outstanding among this group from our point of view are Shāh Walīy Allāh and his grandson Shāh Ismā'īl. Both of them tried to accommodate some transcendental insights of Sirhindī in the *wujūdī* framework. The former also tried to show that the difference between the *waḥdat al-wujūd* of Ibn 'Arabī and the *waḥdat al-shuhūd* of Sirhindī was more a matter of language than substance. Shāh Walīy Allāh's effort to prove the essential oneness of the two doctrines was resented by the faithful followers of

Sirhindī some of whom openly objected to the effort and restated Sirhindī's doctrine[6].

Life

Shāh Walīy Allāh[7] was born in Delhi in 1114/1702. His father, Shāh 'Abd al-Raḥīm (1056/1646 – 1131/1719), a great scholar of *fiqh* and a sufi conversant with many *ṭarīqahs*, took great interest in the education of his talented son. By the age of seven, Walīy Allāh had finished the reading of the Qur'ān; and by the age of ten he was able to study Arabic and Persian books by himself. By the time he was fifteen, he had learned in part or in full all the texts in *ḥadīth*, *tafsīr*, *fiqh*, theology grammar, *taṣawwuf*, medicine and mathematics that were taught in the schools[8]. Shāh 'Abd al-Rahīm then initiated him in the Naqshbandī ṭarīqah[9], but he soon died. Walīy Allāh devoted the next twelve years to an intensive study of religious and rational sciences and formed his own ideas. Meanwhile he continued in his *sulūk* and contemplated on the grave of his father till, as he says, the door of *tawḥīd* was opened to him and ideas began to pour on his heart[10].

In the year 1143/1730 Walīy Allāh left for Ḥajj, spent some fourteen months at Makkah and Madīnah[11], and made an extensive study of hadith literature[12] which convinced him that the heart of the Prophet's religion lay in *Ḥadith*, and could only be revealed through it. He also meditated in the House of God (*Ka'bah*) and beside the grave of the Prophet. The ideas that came to him in these meditations, he put in a book, *Fuyūḍ al Ḥaramayn*[13]. In 1145/1732 he returned to Delhi and embarked upon a great programme of writing. During the next thirty years before his death in 1176/1762 he produced more than fifty one[14] large and short books on various subjects: Qur'ān Ḥadith, fiqh, philosophical theology *(ḥikmah)*, sufism, ethics social philosophy and polity. But the number of books or the variety of subjects is not so important as the way he approached the problems. He combines a broad vision of Islamic history with a deep insight into Islamic ideas and values.

Waḥdat al-Wujūd and *Waḥdat al-Shuhūd*

Walīy Allāh's attitude to *waḥdat al-wujūd* and *wahdat al-shuhūd* comes out clearly from a dream that he had in 1144/1731 and records[15] in the *Fuyūḍ al-Ḥaramayn*. He saw two groups of sufis engaged in dispute, each claimed that their way *(ṭarīqah)* was better than the way of the others. One group did not believe in *waḥdat al-wujūd*, they were given to *dhikr* and had attained the *nisbat yād dāsht*[16]. 'They were looking fresh and bright and their hearts were filled with light'. The other group believed in *waḥdat al-wujūd* and was engaged in contemplation as to how God pervades the world. 'Their faces were dark and dusty, and they were ashamed of their shortcoming regarding God's essence *(dhāt)*'. When they could not resolve their dispute they came to Walīy Allāh for his judgement. In a long speech that Walīy Allāh delivered at the occasion, he stated clearly that *waḥdat al-wujūd* is a true doctrine, but those who believed in it, 'entertained such ideas regarding God's immanence in the world that they could not safeguard His majesty and transcendence'. They lacked in those rational powers that were needed to uphold God's transcendence. It is due to their failure in this respect that they could not realize purification and attain their goal. The other group, Walīy Allāh said, had no aptitude to attain the truths of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. Therefore it was no surprise that they rejected the doctrine. But they had other talents which they used and attained the truths available through those talents. They succeeded in purifying themselves, and reached the end for which they were created.

This dream shows the mind of Walīy Allāh on the issue of the relation between *waḥdat al-wujūd* and *waḥdat al-shuhūd*, as it defines the philosophical task that he is to undertake. He has to affirm that the basic doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* is true, but he has to avoid the mistake that the *wujūdīs* commit regarding the transcendence of God. He has, in other words, to incorporate the transcendental insight of Sirhindī into the *wujūdī* system of Ibn 'Arabī. In doing that Walīy Allāh will not

make use of Sirhindī's concept of non-being, because in his judgement that concept is nothing *(laysa bi shay)*[17]. There is, he says, nothing that opposes[18] Being. Walīy Allāh likes to call his own theosophy the *waḥdat al-wujūd* of a philosopher-sufi *(al-ḥakīm)*[19] distinguishing it from the *waḥdat al-wujūd* of the common sufi which compromises God's transcendence.

Walīy Allāh tries to introduce the transcendence of God into the *wujudī* system by dividing the system into two parts. The first part which, according to him, is the essence of *waḥdat al-wujūd* consists of the following doctrines:

One, all that exists in any form of existence or in any of the worlds of Ibn 'Arabī is a manifestation *(ẓuhūr)* of *Wujūd* (Existence/Being). This *Wujūd* is not a particular *(juz'īy)* existent, nor a general *(kullīy)* reality; it is not a mere concept either. It is the Universal Existence which embraces all existents *(al-Wujūd al-Munbasiṭ 'alā hayākil al-mawjūdāt)*[20]. Often Walīy Allāh uses the short form of the name, the Universal Existence *(al-Wujūd al Munbasiṭ)*; in his later writings such as *Ham'āt*[21] and *Alṭāf al-Quds*[22] he prefers to call it *al-Nafs al-Kullīyah*, the Universal Soul. He has other names also, such as the Supreme Person *(al-Shakhs al-Akbar)*[23] and the Merciful Breath *(al-Nafas al-Raḥmānī)*[24]. He even goes on to say that this is the reality which the philosophers call the Active Intellect *(al-'Aql al-Fa''āl)*[25]; their mistake lies in that they posit many Intelligences, whereas in fact there is only one Intelligence[26].

Second, particular existents or general realities are not parts of the Universal Existence but only its manifestations *(ẓuhūr)*. The Universal Existence is one indivisible reality *(al-ḥaqīqat al-waḥdānīyah)*[27]; it manifests in its entirety in all forms without suffering any division or distribution. Walīy Allāh explains the nature of manifestation *(ẓuhūr)* of the Universal Existence into particular or general forms as follows:

> 'The nature of manifestation *(ẓuhūr)* is that one and the same thing becomes a different unity through (passing into) a particular state in virtue of assuming different accidental properties while maintaining its substantial

character, and then becomes a second unity, and so on, such that it entirely becomes the first and then the second, without undergoing any division or distribution *(taqsīm wa tawzī')*[28].

Although Walīy Allāh generally uses the word manifestation *(ẓuhūr)* for the relation which holds between the Universal Existence and its forms *(mazāhir)*, particular or general, he is not averse to using determination *(ta'ayyun)*[29] for the purpose, which is more common in the *wujūdī* literature.

Third, the forms in which the Universal Existence manifests are the ideal forms *(ṣuwar 'ilmīyah)* of things, general as well as particular. They are, on one hand, the essence *(māhiyah)* of things and their ideal realities, and on the other, the essential modes *(shuyūn dhātīyah)*[30] of the Universal Soul and the objects of its knowledge *(ma'lūm)*. Ibn 'Arabī calls them *a'yān thābitah* or eternally subsisting realities; Sirhindī designates them *ḥaqā'iq mumkināt* or ideas of contingent begings; and Walīy Allāh prefers to refer them as *māhiyāt* or essences. Sirhindī differs fundamentally from Ibn 'Arabī in his conception of the *ḥaqā'iq mumkināt*: Whereas Ibn 'Arabī considers the *a'yān thābitah* as the essential modes and determinations of *Wujūd* or the Divine Essence, Sirhindī regards them as the determination of non-being with an element of being which is the reflection of Divine attributes. Walīy Allāh does not accept, as we said, Sirhindī's concept of non-being; consequently he rejects his view of *ḥaqā'iq mumkināt*. He rather follows Ibn 'Arabī and considers *māhiyāt* as the ideal daterminations of the Universal Existence. He differs, however, from him on one point. According to Ibn 'Arabī the *a'yān thābitah* are unoriginated *(ghayr mukhtara')*; they are eternal with the eternity of the Divine Essence. Walīy Allāh considers this view to be wrong, but he avoids to mention the name of Ibn 'Arabī and ascribes the view, rather, to Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī[31] and others. He believes that the essences are originated *(mubda')* and formed *(maj'ūl)*. But the way he explains the term origination *(ibdā')* does not make his view much different from that of Ibn 'Arabī. The originated[32]

according to him, is that which proceeds directly from the Divine Essence, not from any other thing, and proceeds not in time. On this definition, there is no conflict between Ibn 'Arabī's saying that they are eternal and that they are essential modes of the Universal Being, eternal with its eternity.

Fourth, the emergence of things in existence means that the essences *(māhiyāt)* of things emerge from their state of subsistence into the external world. Walīy Allāh mentions different views regarding the nature of emergence but takes up the view which Ibn 'Arabī and other *wujūdīs* hold[33]. Things come to exist, he says, in the world, means that the Universal Existence appears with the properties that constitute their essences. The essences neither go out from the mind of the Universal Existence, nor do they have their copies or images appearing in the outer world with an existence different from the existence of the Universal Existence. In fact what we call the outer world *(khārij)*[34] is nothing else than the Universal Existence, and what we call time[35] is nothing other than the process of the self-determination of the Universal Existence. Sometimes Walīy Allāh refers to Universal Existence as matter, and the essences as forms[36]; but, as his grandson Shāh Ismā'īl (d. 1246/1827) clarifies, he does not really mean it[37]. Objects are not made of two different existents, a form and a matter; there is only one Universal Existence that appears in various forms which we for our convenience call essences. The relation between the Universal Existence and its forms is like the relation, Walīy Allāh says, between a black line and the words that appear on the paper[38].

Walīy Allāh believes that this part of *waḥdat al-wujūd* is given in the mystic *kashf*[39] and is not in conflict with the *Shar'*[40]. He also thinks that it can be proved by rational arguments. In fact he develops an argument in the *Maktūb Madanī*[41] and touches upon it in other works[42]. He tries to show that our idea of Existence as such is not an empty concept, its reality is assumed by our judgements regarding the existence of some things and the non-existence of others. He also builds up an

[redacted]etween essence and existence for [redacted] character of Existence and its [redacted]ugh self-determination.

[redacted]istake of the *wujūdīs*, Walīy Allāh says, lies in the [redacted]er part of *waḥdat al-wujūd* which concerns the relation between the Universal Existence and the Divine Essence *(al-Dhāt al-llāhīyah)*. He says that on this issue the *wujūdīs* are divided into two groups[43]. According to one, the Universal Existence is same as the Divine Essence, and the difference between them is subjective. This is the view, Walīy Allāh says, of 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī. 'For him it is one existence *(wujūd)* which is common to all existing beings, and it is same as the reality of the Necessary Being and his very Essence *(dhāt)*'[44]. At another place he tells about him that 'in his view the distinction between the Divine Essence and the Universal Existence is a matter of subjective consideration *(i'tibār)* which has no objective basis and 'disappears with your consideration'[45]. This is also the view, he says[46], of the famous Commentator of Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Dāwūd Qaysarī that he states in the Introduction to his Commentary.

The second view is that the Universal Existence is not the Divine Essence itself; it rather proceeds *(ṣādir)* from the Divine Essence. Walīy Allāh ascribes this view to Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī. In the *al-Khayr al-Kathīr* he quotes the following passage from him:

> "Since God is one, nothing proceeds from him except one... and this one thing is in our view the Universal Existence that flows *(fāḍa)* to everything that exists, or does not exist but God knows that it will exist. This Existence is common between (God's) higher knowledge which is the First Intelligence and between all existing beings contrary to the view of the philosophers. For, there is nothing there in the view of true gnostics *(muḥaqqiqīn)* except God, and the world is nothing more than the ideas of God subsequently qualified with existence"[47].

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Walīy

Walīy Allāh says that the latter view is correct and the former wrong. He refers to these two views in his different books; but every where he mentions the names of Jāmī and Qūnawī, and deliberately avoids saying anything about Ibn 'Arabī. At one place, however, in a less known work, Commentary on the Quatrains, he makes the following observation about Ibn 'Arabī's position:

> "Shaykh Muḥīy al Dīn, who is the leader of those who believe in *waḥdat al-wujūd*, does not shy away from applying the name of *al-Ḥaqq* to that reality which is Existence. But no one objects to him, for he means nothing but pure truth *(ḥaqīqah maḥḍah)*. However, if he had called it the originated *(mubda')* and the formed *(maj'ul)* he would have saved his readers from confusion"[50].

Walīy Allāh admits here clearly that Ibn 'Arabī identifies *al-Ḥaqq* or the Divine Essence with the Universal Existence. This is no surprise. What is really surprising, rather bewildering, is his remark that what Ibn 'Arabī says is 'pure truth'. For this is exactly what Jāmī and Qayṣarī have, on his own admission, said, but he has found fault with them. In view of this statement one wonders as to what Walīy Allāh really wants to do. Does he want to make a real difference between the Divine Essence and the Universal Soul, or is he only interested in changing the terminology? We shall however proceed on the assumption that he wants to really differentiate

the Divine Essence from the Universal Soul, and take the remark as a slip out of an excessive regard for Ibn 'Arabī.

The first thing that Walīy Allāh says in connection with his effort to differentiate the Divine Essence from the Universal Existence is that the relation which holds between the Divine Essence and the Universal Existence is completely different from the relation that holds between the Universal Existence and its forms. He says that this difference is not ordinarily appreciated by the *wujūdīs*; they regard them just the same. Consequently they identify the Divine Essence with the Universal Existence, and consider the world as the manifestation and determination of the Divine Essence. That is, however, not correct[51]. There are four[52] ways of the manifestation *(ẓuhūr)* of one thing into another: one, the manifestation of a general reality like humanity in individual men and women; two, the manifestation of some stuff, say wax, in various forms, such as candles, figures etc.; three, the manifestation of a faculty, say intellect, into truths that are acquired through it; and four, the manifestation of number one into two, three, four and other numbers that it gives rise to. But the relation that holds between the Divine Essence and the Universal Soul, does not come, he says, under any of these categories. The Universal Soul is not a manifestation or determination of the Divine Essence.

It is a *Ṣādir* from the Divine Essence, and the relation between them is a relation of *ṣudūr*, not manifestation *(ẓuhūr)*[53]. *Ṣādir* is usually rendered as emanate and *ṣudūr* as emanation; we shall also follow the convention. But let it be clear that Walīy Allāh does not use these words in their neo-Platonic sense. In an illuminative passage in the *Tafhīmāt* he explains what he means by the term *Ṣādir*, and how it differs from the Neo-Platonic emanate.

> "The first emanate *(Ṣādir)* from the Necessary Reality *(al-Ḥaqīqat al-Wājibīyah)* is one of the names of God, not an Intelligence as the philosophers understand it. A name is a title *('unwān)* of a thing that applies to it and is not

different from it. The thing as it is, is not a name. it is a name when it assumes a property *(khuṣūṣīyah)* which either elucidates the essence *(māhīyah)* of the thing as 'even' does with 'four', or which is other than, external to, and not implied in the essence, as it is the case between 'writer' and 'man'. This is the nature of name *('ism)* in general. But so far as the First Emanate *(al-Ṣādir al-Awwal)* is concerned, it is a name of the first kind, that is, it is inherent in the Essence. For the Essence of the Necessary Being is its very existence, and we cannot imagine something to be implied in Existence which is not inherent in the Essence. The philosophers' Intelligence, on the other hand, is a different substance *(jawhar mutaghāyir)*; it is neither a title of the Necessary being, nor does is apply to it"[54].

Walīy Allāh here identifies the First Emanate as Intelligence[55]; at other places, particularly in his later works, he identifies it as the Universal Soul[56] or the Universal Existence. At times he explains[57] the apparent contradiction by saying that the Universal Soul is Intelligence, if you consider the former as the unity of all essences, without considering their existence; and the Intelligence is the Universal Soul, if you consider the essence as existing in an undifferentiated whole. Returning now to the point under discussion: The above passage makes it perfectly clear that the Universal Existence is not an Emanate in the sense of a separate entity as we have in neo-Platonism. Why, in spite of this fundamental difference, does Walīy Allāh like to call the Universal Existence an Emanate *(Ṣādir)*? The answer is that he wants to maintain that the difference between the Divine Essence and the Universal Existence is not subjective which the words manifestation *(ẓuhūr)* and determination *(ta'ayyun)* are generally taken to suggest, but an objective difference that the word Emanate *(Ṣādir)* underlines.

Walīy Allāh sometimes qualifies the term *ṣudūr* and *ṣādir*. He says that the Universal Soul proceeds from the Divine Essence by way of origination *(ibdā')*, it is an Emanate through

origination *(al-Ṣādir bi-ṭarīq al-Ibdā')*[58]. But by this he means nothing more than that the Universal Soul proceeds from none except the Divine Essence, and that it is above time. Hence this qualification adds nothing towards understanding the nature of the Universal Existence. On the contrary, it is somewhat misleading, as it gives the impression that the Universal Existence is something separate from the Divine Being, whereas the fact is that it is not.

The real nature of the Universal Soul is revealed when we take it as a name of God. "If you want the ultimate truth about it", Walīy Allāh Says, "then know that it is a name of the First Being and its title"[59]. This point has already been made in the passage that explains what Walīy Allāh means by *Ṣādir*. A name elucidates *(sharḥ)* the quality or property of a thing that may be a part of its essence or may not be. But the Universal Soul is a name of God in the sense that it elucidates what is implied in the Divine Essence. Further, it does not elucidate one or the other aspect of the Divine Essence, but rather brings out all that is contained in it. In contrast to particular names *(asmā' al-juz'īyāt)* such as the Rewarder *(al-Mun'im)* and the Punisher *(al-Mu'adhdhib)*, which are concerned with some beings and not others, the Universal Soul is a Great Name *(al-ism al-a'ẓam)* of God. It applies to the Divine Essence in its entirety, and its comprehensiveness *(iṭlāq)* matches the comprehensiveness (*iṭlāq*) of the Divine Essence[60].

Walīy Allāh, at times, calls, as we have seen, Intelligence the First Emanate, and at other time the Universal Soul. Sometimes he calls Intelligence the First Emanate and the Universal Soul the Second Emanate. Now if we take Intelligence and the Universal Soul as the First and the Second Emanate, there would be two Great Names of God. Intelligence is a Great name of God in the sense that it elucidates the character of the Divine Essence as possessing ideal essences of all perceivable and intelligible realities that ever manifest in the world[61]. The Universal Soul is another Great Name. it elucidates the character of the Divine Essence as possessing all

the essences not only as essences, but also as existing in their undifferentiated unity[62], or as possessing essences in action[63], for that is what existence is.

Now that Walīy Allāh has said that one brings out the true nature of the Universal Soul when one takes it as the Great Name of God, the problem of differentiating it from the Divine Essence becomes much more difficult. "A name is a title of a thing, applies to it, and is not different from it". This is what he says about name in general. As for the Intelligence, it applies not to a part of the Divine Essence, but to its entirety. It is not different from the Divine Essence at all; the only difference is that when we say 'Divine Essence', we affirm the Divine Essence only; but when we say Intelligence, we affirm the Divine Essence as well as bring out the fact that the Divine Essence is conscious of the essences *(māhiyāt)* of all possible beings with a consciousness that is not external to, but inherent in the Divine Essence. Similarly the Universal Soul applies to the Divine Essence in its entirety, and is not at all different from it, except that it brings out the character of the Divine Essence that it exists in the essences *(māhiyāt)* of things which it is conscious of. In the passage quoted above Walīy Allāh states clearly that the Essence of the Necessary Being is Existence; a point that he states in many of his other works. This means that the Universal Soul elucidates the Existence which is the Divine Essence itself, and not something different. The Existence of the Universal Soul is the existence of God. To use a *wujūdī* terminology, the Universal Soul is a determination *(ta'ayyun)* and a consideration *('i'tibār)* of the Divine Essence.

That the Universal Soul does not have an existence other than the Existence of God follows also from the view of the attributes and names that Walīy Allāh holds[64]. He rejects the view of the theologians that attributes exist with an existence distinct from the existence of Divine Essence *(al-Dhāt al-Ilāhīyah)*, and agrees with Ibn 'Arabī and other *wujūdīs* that the names of God are one with his essence in respect to existence and different only in connotation. The names do not refer to an

existence which is over and above the existence of the Essence; they refer and apply to nothing but the Essence. Hence the Universal Soul as a name refers and applies to the Divine Essence, and differs from it in respect to what it means, or, to put in Walīy Allāh's words, in respect to its eludicatory character *(bi l-māhīyāt al-sharḥīyah).*

Walīy Allāh identifies Existence with The Divine Essence not only in the passage quoted above but in other writings, too, such as *al-Khayr al-Kathir*[65] and *al-Budūr al-Bāzighah*[66], etc. But in the *Lamḥāt* and other works he considers *Wujūd* as an attribute *(ṣifat)*[67] of the Divine Essence. This refers to the Universal Existence. What he has elsewhere called name he calls here attribute. In the *Maktūb Madanī* he visualizes a possible objection to this distinction between the Divine Essence and the Universal Existence.

> "No one can object and say that when I affirm the First Being and its Emanate (*Ṣādir*) I must posit the Being *(Wujūd)* and Reality that may embrace both, and I must continue enquiring into the *Wujūd* and affirm that it is prior to both and manifests in them."

And answers:

> "This so called Being is a myth *(mafrūḍ)* created by the mind, it has no foundation in reality like the teeth of the ghoul"[68].

The point of this answer is that since there is no difference between the Divine Essence and the Universal Existence, the latter is just the name of the former and one with it; there is therefore, no point in asking what embraces both. The Divine Essence and the Universal Soul are Existence themselves, and the idea of an existence beyond them is nothing but a myth.

To sum up: In his quest for a real difference between the Divine Essence and the Universal Soul that would save the transcendence of God, Walīy Allāh started by saying that the Universal Soul is not a manifestation or determination of the Divine Essence, it is rather an Emanate from Him that proceeds

directly from Him, and is above time. But when he explained this, it became clear that the Universal Soul is not an Emanate at all, because it is not a separate entity. It is rather a name of God, a Great Name that applies to the Divine Essence in its entirety and comprehensiveness. It is not different from the Divine Essence except in that it brings out the property of the Divine Essence that it exists in the form of the essence of things taken in their entirety. It does not refer to an existence over and above the existence of the Divine Essence; it refers to the Divine Existence itself. It is Divine Existence. If we use the *wujūdī* language, we would say that it is one and the same Reality which considered in itself *(lā bi-sharṭ shay)* is the Divine Essence, and considered as characterized by existence in totality *(bi-sharṭ lā shay)* is the Universal Soul. In other words, the Universal Soul is the determination *(ta'ayyun)* and consideration *(i'tibar)* of the Divine Essence. Walīy Allāh may not like this characterization, but this is what his view comes down to. In fact, he does not seem to have a strong feeling against this. At times when he is in a different mood, he does not shy away from saying that the Universal Soul is a determination or consideration *(i'tibār)*[69] of the Divine Essence; he sometimes uses an instance of manifestation *(ẓuhūr)* to illustrate[70] the relation between the Divine Essence and the Universal Soul. Summing up his discussion of the relation between the Divine Essence and the Universal Existence in the *Ham'āt*, for instance, he writes:

> "The relation that exists between the Universal Soul and the Divine Essence is many faceted relation *('umm al-nisbah)*; to put that relation in one category is to do injustice with it. It appears to be like the relation that exists between 'four' and 'even'. Considered in itself, it is nothing other than 'four'. But when you descend from that level, and look at four without taking into consideration something in addition to it, you have 'even'. Now if you say that 'even' is a name *(ism)* of 'four', that is right; and if you say that it is a title of 'four', that is also possible. And if you bring your glance a little down, and consider

the association of this name with 'four', you can take it as a predicate *(ṣifat)* of four. If you move a little further down and consider the dependence of the quality on the subject qualified and the essential precedence *(taqaddum dhātī)* of the subject over its quality, you will see that the quality is sustained by the subject, and regard 'even' as something originated *(mubda')* or formed *(maj'ūl)* by 'four'. If you consider the generality *('umūm)* and absoluteness *(iṭlāq)* of four and the particularization *(khuṣūs)* and limitation *(taqyīd)* of 'even' without putting an opposition or contradiction between them, 'even' will be the determination *(ta'ayyun)* and manifestation *(ẓuhūr)* of 'four'[71].

Walīy Allāh has said at many places in his books that his views are not really different from the *waḥdat al-wujūd* of Ibn 'Arabī properly understood. For instance, after a concise presentation of *waḥdat al-wujūd* in the *Tafhīmāt*, he writes: "This is the vision of the sufis and their intuition. And this vision is true"[72]. In the *Maktūb Madanī*, he says that the Intelligence and the Universal Soul, as he has distinguished, correspond to the *Fayḍ al-Aqdas* and the *Fayḍ al-Muqaddas*[73] of the sufis.

The only thing which Walīy Allāh would insist in the proper interpretation of *waḥdat al-wujūd* is that it should maintain that the difference between the Divine Essence and the Universal Soul is objective. He thinks that Jamī reduces the difference to a subjective consideration, whereas Qūnawī holds it to be objective. He sides with Qūnawī, and insists that there is an objective basis for the difference in the nature of Reality itself that accounts for the plurality of things, which is a reality not an illusion. It is true that he refuses to find out a basis for this objective difference in the concept of an existence over and above the existence of the Divine Essence. For, that would have been a violation of the fundamentals of Ibn 'Arabī's *waḥdat al-wujūd*. He, therefore, looks for the difference in idea instead of existence. An example of an objective difference that is in the domain of idea and not existence is mathematical

relations. Our ordinary numbers have no footing in existence, yet the relation that exists between one number and the other is objective in as much as it is not within the powers of any individual to change those relations. You cannot say, for instance, that seven is prior to six, or that two and two make five. Similarly, the difference between the Divine Essence and the Universal Soul is objective even though it is not a matter of existential difference[74].

The question is whether this view of objective difference is inconsistent with Jāmī's characterization of it as subjective *(i'tibārī)*? Is it not the case that Walīy Allāh has been unfair to Jāmī, and attributed to him a purely subjective view? Maybe what Jāmī says *i'tibārī* is what Walīy Allāh says objective in a non-existential sense of objectivity. Walīy Allāh seems to see this possibility at the end of *Maktūb Madanī* where he says: "The real purpose (of Jāmī's words) is to negate the self-existence of realities, and to assert that they are considerations and relations of the Real Being *(al-Ḥaqq)* in the sense that Being manifests in them and determines itself in them, and not in the sense that they are only subjectively different from it"[75].

Shāh Walīy Allāh does not discuss the objections which Sirhindī has raised against *waḥdat al-wujūd*, nor does he show how his interpretation of the doctrine would avoid the consequences for religion and morality which follow, as Sirhindī has shown, from that doctrine. He appears to believe that once the transcendence of God which *waḥdat al-wujūd* allows is recognized to be objective, objections would drop out. This is, however, not clear.

Shāh Ismā'īl

The second attempt to introduce transcendence into the *wujūdī* system was made by Shāh Ismā'īl. He had a better appreciation of Sirhindī's ideas than Walīy Allāh, and his is definitely a much more serious attempt to differentiate the Divine from the world. Though he very openly recognizes his

debt to Ibn 'Arabī, Sirhindī and Walīy Allāh, the position he has worked out is nobody's but his own. "What I have put in my book", he says in the introduction to his book, *'Abaqāt*, "is not just what I have learned from these masters *(a'immah)*, though their ideas are like root for its tree and seed for its fruit"[76].

Shāh Ismā'īl[77] (1193/1779 – 1246/1827) was the grandson of Shāh Walīy Allāh. His father Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī died when he was quite young. His uncle Shāh 'Abd al-Qādīr brought him up and looked after his education. Shāh Ismā'īl also studied with his two other uncles, Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz and Shāh Rafī' al-Dīn, all scholars of repute and stars of Walīy Allāh's heaven. When he was twenty he came in contact with a renowned sufi of the time Sayyid Aḥmad of Braily (1201/1789 – 1246/1831) and became his disciple. In his company Shāh Ismā'īl made Ḥajj in 1237 and visited Medīnah. After returning to India, he made a tour of the northern India, preaching Islam and calling people to repent and take Islam seriously. He also fired in them a vision of Islamic power and government on the lines of the Khilāfat of the Righteous Caliphs in the early Islam. This was in a sense an effort to translate into practice the vision which Walīy Allāh had upheld in his works. In the year 1241/1825 he went out with Sayyid Aḥmad Brailawī to the north-west frontier of India and succeeded in establishing an Islamic government, which for various reasons could not last for long. In the year 1246/1827 he was killed along with his master in a battle with Sikhs at Balakot in Punjab.

The central point in Shāh Ismā'īl's thought concerns the relation of the Universal Existence with the objects of the world. For Walīy Allāh this relation is one of manifestation. Things are the manifestations or the determinations of the Universal Existence such that the Universal Existence appears in them all without undergoing any division or distinction. Things are the states of the Universal Existence. Shāh Ismā'īl differs from this view. For him the relation between the Universal Existence and the objects of the world is a relation of

qayyumīyah: the Universal Existence is the sustainer *(qayyūm)* of things, and they are sustained by it. We will explain:

Objects are constituted, according to Shāh Ismā'īl, by two things: a form and a substratum. The form is the shadow *(zill)* of the idea of the object in God's knowledge, and the substratum is a manifestation *(mazhar)* or determination *(ta'ayyun)* of the Universal Existence. The substratum supports the form; it is it's supporter *(muqawwim)*. Since the substratum is nothing other than a determinate form of the Universal Existence, the ultimate supporter of forms is the Universal Existence. Shāh Ismā'īl, however, prefers to call Universal Existence the Sustainer *(Qayyūm)* of forms rather than their Supporter *(Muqawwim)* which he reserves for its determinate, the substratum.

The form of an object is not the *idea* of the object in God's knowledge. This is agreed upon by everyone, the idea does not leave God's mind and appear in the world. But what really appears in the world is a matter of dispute. For Ibn 'Arabī as well as Shāh Walīy Allāh that which appears in the world is neither the idea nor something which may be called the image or the copy of the idea. According to them, the Universal Existence appears itself at one time bearing the properties that constitute one idea, and appears at another time bearing properties that constitute another idea. What we call the form of a thing in the world is not something existing in any sense different from the Existence of the Universal Soul, it is the Universal Soul in a particular state, and obviously a state is not something existing over and above the thing itself. Shāh Ismā'īl, on the other hand, ascribes to the form a kind of existence of its own other than the existence of its substratum. On his view the 'objects are combinations *(zawj tarkībī)* formed by the contact of essences *(māhiyāt)* with the source of determination'[78] (i.e. the Universal Existence). On Ibn 'Arabī's and Shāh Walīy Allāh's view the object is not a combination at all, but only a state of the Universal Soul.

The relation between the shadow and the Universal Soul may appear, Shāh Ismā'īl says, to be a relation between form and matter, but in fact it is altogether a different relation. Form and matter depend upon each other, and none can exist apart from the other. That is not the case between the shadow and the Universal Soul. The relation that exists between them is like the relation between an image in the mirror and the mirror itself. The mirror exists in itself apart from the image, whereas the image does not and cannot exist but in and by the mirror. Similarly, the Universal Soul exists by itself whereas the shadow forms of the objects exist in the Universal Soul and cannot exist apart from it. Again, even though the image exists in the mirror it is not one with the mirror; it has a separate existence, and as compared to the mirror it is of a completely lower order of existence, as if it is not an existence at all. "The images formed in the mirror", Shāh Ismā'īl says, "have a sort of existence, though it is not the real existence *(al-wujūd al-aṣlī)*, the existence of the object or the existence of accidents *(a'rāḍ)*, whether the accidents inhere in the object or are attributed to it"[79]. Similarly, the shadow forms of things even though they exist in the Universal Soul have an existence different from the existence of the Universal Soul. They do not have a real existence since they do not exist as independent objects, they only exist in and by the Universal Soul. They even do not exist as accidents, for they do not inhere in the Universal Soul like qualities, nor are they attributed to it as relations. As the mirror is not qualified with the images that exist in it in any sense of qualification, similarly the Universal Soul is not qualified with the shadows of the objects that appear in it. They are sustained by the Universal Soul just as the images are sustained by the mirror. This is the meaning of the relation of sustenance *(qayyumīyah)* which Shāh Ismā'īl believes, exists between the Universal Soul and the shadows *(zilāl)* of objects.

Shāh Ismā'īl distinguishes between two forms of sustenance *(qayyūmīyah)*: one which holds between two things that are essentially one *(bi ittihād al-mawṭin)*, and the other

which holds between things that are of different order *(bi ikhtilāf al-mawṭin)*. The first, he says, is called manifestation *(ẓuhūr)*, and the other origination *(ibdā')*. He then explains that the relation of the Universal Soul with its determinate forms which are the substratas bearing the shadows of things is one of manifestation, and the relation that exists between the Universal Soul and the shadows is that of origination. He prefers to call it the relation of *fāṭir* and *maftūr*, apparently to distinguish it from the *ibdā'* of Shāh Walīy Allah. He makes two crucial distinctions between the relations of manifestation and origination (*faṭara*): One, manifestation is a relation that holds between two things that are essentially one, whereas origination is a relation that holds between things that are completely different. Second, whereas a manifesting reality *(ẓāhir)* is qualified with the attributes of its manifestations totally or partially, the originator is not qualified by the properties of the originated, it is neither the subject nor the ground of those properties.

Besides the case of image and mirror, Shāh Ismā'īl cites three other cases of sustenance in which the sustaining object is not qualified by the object sustained. One is the sustenance by mind of ideas that it conceives, the second is the sustenance by imagination of the images that it forms, and the third is the sustenance by the sun of its forms which appear to us from a long distance. In all these cases the objects sustained exist in their sustainer, and yet the sustainer is not qualified with the objects sustained.

But whereas it is true that the sustainer is not qualified with the attributes of the object sustained, it is also true that the sustained owes its being to the sustainer and as such and in this only matter the sustainer is qualified with the sustained. The object we have said is a combination of a shadow and a substratum. To the extent it is a shadow the object is originated by the Universal Soul, but it is different from the Universal Soul, and its properties are its own properties and cannot be predicated of the Universal Soul. But to the extent the object

participates in the Universal Soul, or more precisely, in its determinate form which is the substratum supporting the shadow, as the image participates in its object or the form of the sun participates in the sun, to that extent the object is one with the Universal Soul. The rest of Shāh Ismā'īl's philosophy is not at all different from the *waḥdat al-wujūd* of Ibn 'Arabī or Shāh Walīy Allāh.

Shāh Ismā'īl illustrates the relation that holds between God and the world in this way[80]: Suppose a scientist conceives in his mind a whole universe like ours with all the things we have in it at the plane of ideas, then by his imaginative power produces the entire universe in the realm of imagination where everything is in motion, acting and reacting as happens in our world. Substitute God for the scientist and the Universal Soul for the imaginary world. If you look at this imaginary world from the point of view of God it is nothing but fancies *(khayālāt)*; only God exists and the world does not exist. But if you look at the world and the things constituting it, it is a real world, active and full of life. Shāh Ismā'īl says that to characterize the world as nothing but imaginations *(khayālāt)* of God is not to deny its reality. For the imaginations of God are not like our imaginations that are subjective and devoid of reality. The world stands with God as ideas stand to the mind that conceives them or as imaginative forms stand to the faculty of imagination. This is the way Shāh Ismā'īl introduces Sirhindī's transcendentalism in the *wujūdī* system.

Notes and References

1. For his life see Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Hayat Shaykh abd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawi*, Delhi, Nudwat al-Musannifin, 1964.
2. Khawajā Ma'ṣūm (d. 1079/1668), the second son of Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī and his *Khalīfah*, did a lot in popularizing the Naqshbandiāh order; His disciples have been said to be more than ninety thousand. In his letters which have been published in three volumes he has vigorously defended the doctrines of his father. For his life see Abd al-Hayy, *Nuzhat al-Khawātir*, Vol.V, pp.439-41; Rahman 'Alī, *Tadhkira Ulamā-i-Hind*, pp.470-1; Ghulam Sarwar, *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā* (Lucknow, Nawalkishore, 1914) Vol.II, pp.639-40.
3. See letter 5 in the collection of his letter entitled *Kalimat Ṭayyibāt*, (Delhi, Maktaba Mujtabā'ī, 1309/1891).
4. Khawajā 'Abdullah (d.1047/1663), the second son of Khawaja Bāqī Billāh, commonly known as Khawaja Khurd pursued *Sulūk* under the guidance of Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī but in thesosophy adhered to the doctrine of Ibn 'Arabī on whose books he wrote some glosses, beside a number of treatises on various sufi subjects. For his life see Walīy Allāh, *Anfās al-'Arifīn* (Delhi, Mujtaba'ī Press, 1335 A.H.) pp.15-19; 'Abd al-Ḥayy, *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir*, Vol. V, pp.296-7; Shaykh Ikrām, *Rawd Kawthar*, (Lahore, Idarah Thaqafat Islamiyah) pp.213-5.
5. Shaykh Muhibbullah Allāhābādī (d. 1058/1648), born in a town of Khayrabad district, northern India, passed years in Delhi and Lahore and finally settled at Allahabad. He wrote many treatises in Persian expounding Ibn 'Arabī's doctrines, and became notorious for his short treatise *al-Taswīyah* in which he indentified Divine existence with the existence of the world, causing strong resentment and condemnation. Prince Dara Shikoh admired him and turned to him for guidance. For his life see 'Abd al-Hayy,

Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir, Vol. V, pp.322-5; Raḥmān 'Alī, *Tadhkirah 'Ulamā-i-Hind*, Urdu trans. Ayyūb Qādri, (Pakistan Historical Society, 1961), pp.404-5; Shaykh Mohd. Ikram, *Rawd Kawthar*, (Lahore, Idārah Thaqāfat Islāmīyah, 1982) pp.440-2; Mohd. Ḥusayn Murādabādī, *Anwār al-'Arifīn* (Muradabad, Siddiqi Press, 1290 A.H.) p.435; Dr. Tahir Ali's introduction to his edition of Shah Muḥibullāh's *Akhass al-Khawass* (Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan)

6. Ghulām Yaḥyā (d. 1190/1776) a disciple of Mirza Maẓhar Jān Jānān (d. 1195/1780), leader of the Naqshbandis of his time wrote a treatise, *Kalimat al-Ḥaqq*, with the blessings of his master, in which he showed that Sirhindi's philosophy of *Waḥdat al-Shuhūd* differed from Ibn Arabi's *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* on all essential points.
7. For the life of Shāh Walīy Allāh see his autobiography appended to his work on the life of his father, uncle and teachers, *Anfās al-'Arifīn*, Delhi, 1897, 'Abd al-Ḥayy, *Nuzhat al-Khawātir*, Hyderabad (India), Vol.VI; Muḥammad Raḥīm Bakhsh, *Ḥayāt Walīy*, Lahore, 1955; *Tadhkirah Shāh Walīy Allāh*, Manzur Aḥmad Nu`mani, (ed.) Bareilly, Al-Furqan, 1941; Ubayd Allāh Sindhi, *Shāh Walīy Allāh awr unka Falsafah*, Sindh Sagar Academy, Lahore.
8. For these details see Walīy Allāh's short Autobiography appended to his *Anfās al-'Arfīn*, pp.202-204
9. Walīy Allāh says that he acquired besides Naqshbandiyah the other two *ṭarīqahs*, Chishtīyah and Jilānīyah from his father. (*Al-Tafhimāt*, Surat, India, Vol.I, p.15).
10. Walīy Allāh, *Anfās al-'Arifīn*, 203
11. Shāh 'Abdul Azīz, *Malfūzat*, p.93
12. 'Abdul Ḥayy (*Nuzhat al-Khawātir*, Vol.VI, p.400) mentions the books of Hadith that Walīy Allāh heard from Abū Ṭāhir al-Kindī: the *Saḥīḥ* of Bukhāri and Muslim; the *Sunun* of Trimidhī, Abu Daud and Ibn Majah; the *Muwaṭṭā* of Malik, the *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn

Hanbal, the *Risalah* of Shafi`I, *al-Jāmi al-Kabīr*, *Al-Adab al-Mufrad*, the *Musand* of *Dārimī* and some part of al-*Shifā*. Then he came to Mecca and heard from Wafad Allāh al-Mālikī and Tājuddin al-Qalā'i the *Siḥāḥ Sittah*, *Muwaṭṭā* of Malik, *Musnad* of Darimi and *Kitāb al-Athār* of Imam Muḥammad.

13. Walīy Allāh, *Fuyūd, al-Ḥaramayn*, Urdu tr. Ghulam Sarwar, 1957, Sindh Sagar Academy, Lahore, pp.51-52
14. For details see M.Rahīm Baksh, *Ḥayāt Walīy*, opt. cit., pp.545-580. The author says that besides these there are other books that are preserved in old libraries and that he has mentioned only those books which have been published.
15. Walīy Allāh, *Fuyūḍ al-Ḥaramayn*, mushāhadah 1, pp.53-57
16. For the explanation of *Nisbat yad dāsht* see Walīy Allāh, *Ham'āt*, opt. cit. pp.65ff.
17. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Khayr al-Kathīr*, Cairo., 1394/1976, p.23
18. Walīy Allāh, *Lamhāt*, ed. Ghulam Mustafa al-Qasimi, Hyderabad, (Pakistan), p.8
19. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Khayr al-Kathīr*, opt. cit. p.36
20. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, ed. Chulam Mustafa al-Qasimi, Hyderabad (Pakistan), 1967, Vol.II, p.268
21. Walīy Allāh, *Ham'āt*, opt. cit. pp.73ff
22. Walīy Allāh, *Altāf al-Quds*, Delhi, 1305 A.H., pp.33ff
23. Walīy Allāh, *Saṭ'āt*, ed. Ghulam Mustafa, Shāh Walīy Allāh Academy, Hyderabad (Pakistan), 1964, p.2
24. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Hyderabad (Pakistan), opt. cit., Vol.II, p.272.
25. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Surat (India), Vol.I, P.46
26. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Khayr al-Kathīr*, opt. cit., pp.22-23
27. Walīy Allāh, *Ham'āt*, opt.cit. p.71
28. Walīy Allāh, *Lamḥāt*, opt. cit., pp.22-23; *Ham'āt*, pp.70-71
29. Walīy Allāh, *Ham'āt*, p.75
30. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Hyderabad (Pakistan), Vol.II, p.268

31. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Khayr al-Kathīr*, opt. cit., pp.37-38; *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Surat (India), Vol.I, p.56
32. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Surat (India), Vol.I, p.56
33. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Hyderabad (Pakistan), Vol.II, pp.267-268
34. Walīy Allāh, *Lamḥāt*, opt. cit. p.6,17
35. Ibid, p.17; *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Surat (India), Vol.I, p.159
36. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Surat (India), Vol.I, p.157
37. Shāh Ismā'īl, *'Abaqāt*, al-Majilis al-Ilmi, Karachi, 1960, p.21
38. Walīy Allāh, *Ham'āt*, p.72, *Aṭlāf al-Qudus*, opt. cit., p.54
39. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Hyderabad (Pakistan), Vol.II, p.269
40. Though Walīy Allāh thinks that *waḥdat al-wujūd* does not conflict with the *Shar'*, he does not however approve of the idea that it can be derived from the *Shar'*. He says that the prophets do not teach *waḥdat al-wujūd*, they rather follow, what he calls, the way of nature *(fiṭrah)* (see *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Hyderabad (Pakistan), Vol.II, pp. 264-267). In the *Ham'āt* (p.64), he writes: "Those who interpret the words of the prophets on the lines of *waḥdāt al-wujūd* do not know them, and do not know their way."
41. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Hyderabad (Pakistan), Vol.II, pp.269-272
42. Walīy Allāh, *Alṭāf al-Quds*, pp.53-54
43. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Hyderabad (Pakistan), Vol.II, p.274
44. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Khayr al-Kathīr*, opt. cit., p.38
45. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Hyderabad (Pakistan), Vol.II, p.274
46. Walīy Allāh, *Alṭāf al-Quds*, opt. cit., p.55
47. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Khayr al-Kathīr*, opt. cit., p.37
48. Ibid, p.37
49. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Hyderabad (Pakistan), Vol.II, p.274
50. Walīy Allāh, *Kashf al-Ghayn fi Sharh Rubā'īyatayn*, Matba' Mujtaba'ī, Delhi, 1310 A.H., pp.8-9

51. Walīy Allāh, *Ham'āt*, opt. cit., 73
52. Walīy Allāh, *Lamḥāt*, opt. cit. pp.23-24, also *Ham'āt*, pp.70-71 and p.6
53. Walīy Allāh distinguishes between *Ṣudūr* and *Ẓuhūr* at many places in his book and under different names. In *Al-Khayr al-Khatīr* (Published from Majlis 'Ilmi, Surat, India, p.40) he calls them two forms of *inbijās* (literally, bursting forth, gushing), one, *inbijās* of the absolute *(mutlāq)* from the abslute *(Mutlaq)*, and second, the *inbijas* of the determinate *(muta'ayyan)* from the absolute. The former is *ṣudūr* and the latter *ẓuhūr*. In the *Tafhīmat*, Surat (India), Vol.I, p.47, he calls the former *tasammī* (that is, to take up a name) and the latter *Khalq*, creation.
54. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Hyderabad (Pakistan), Vol.II, pp.28-29; *At-Tafhīmāt*, Surat (India), Vol.I, pp.167-168; *Lamḥāt*, p.22; *Al-Khayr al-Khatīr* (India), pp.20-21; *Al-Budūr al-Bāzighah*, Surat, (India), p.11
55. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Surat (India), Vol.I, p.108; *Al-Budūr*, p.11. *Saṭ'āt*, p.2; *Lamḥāt*, p.18
56. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Surat (India), Vol.I, p.109
57. Walīy Allāh, *Lamḥāt*, p.19
58. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Hyderabad (Pakistan), Vol.II, p.274
59. Walīy Allāh, *Lamḥāt*, p.22
60. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Hyderabad (Pakistan), Vol.II, p.31; *Al-Budūr al-Bazighah*, p.23
61. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Budūr al-Bazighah*, pp.11-12; *Al-Khayr al-Kathīr* (India), p.21
62. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Budūr al-Bazighah*, p.13
63. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Khayr al-Kathīr*, Cairo, p.16
64. For Walīy Allāh's view on attributes see *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Hyderabad (Pakistan), Vol.II, pp.282-283; *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Surat (India), Vol.I, p.48; *Al-Khayr al-Kathīr* (Cairo), p.19
65. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Khayr al-Kathīr*, Cairo, p.21, 16

66. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Budūr al-Bazighah*, p.11; *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Surat (India), Vol.I, pp.168-169
67. Walīy Allāh, *Lamḥāt*, p.5
68. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Hyderabad (Pakistan), Vol.II, p.276
69. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Surat (India), Vol.I, p.168
70. Walīy Allāh, *Lamḥāt*, pp.3-4
71. Walīy Allāh, *Ham'āt*, opt. cit., pp.74-75; *Alṭāf al-Qudus*, pp.55-56
72. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Surat (India), Vol.I, pp.186-187
73. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Hyderabad (Pakistan), Vol.II, p.272
74. For the difference between an objective and a subjective non-existential determination (*ta'ayyun khārijī* and *ta'ayyun i'tibārī*) see *Al-Tafhīmat*, Surat (India), Vol.I.p.169.
75. Walīy Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt*, Hyderabad (Pakistan), Vol.II, p.284
76. Shāh Ismaīl, *'Abaqāt* (Karachi, al-Majlis al-Ilmi, 1380/1960) p.3
77. For the life of Shah Ismail see Abd al-Hayy, *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭīr*, Vol.VI, pp. 56-60; Shaykh Ikrām, *Mawj Kawthar* (Lahore, Idarah Thaqāfat īslamiyah 1982) pp.37-40; Abul Ḥasan 'Alī Nadwī, *Sirat Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd* (Lucknow, Majlis Tahqīqāt wa Nashrīyat, 6th ed. 1977); Ibrahim Mir Siyalkoti, *Tārīkh Aḥl Ḥadīth* (Delhi, Kitab International, 1995) pp.19-22
78. Shāh Ismā'īl, *'Abaqāt*, opt. cit. p.14
79. Ibid, p.29
80. Ibid, pp.33-36